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R E P L Y

*Nov 1484*  
To the late Printed

A N S V V E R

Given to the

L E T T E R,

Directed by the

P R O T E S T E R S

TO THEIR

B R E T H R E N,

Who are for carrying on of the Publick  
Resolutions, and for the Authority  
of the late Pretended Assemblies.



Printed in the Year 1653.

[*South*]

REP  
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 To the late Printed  
 ANSWER  
 Given to the  
 LETTER  
 Disposed by the  
 PROTESTERS  
 TO THEIR  
 BROTHERS  
 Who are for carrying on of the Publick  
 Resolutions and for the Authority  
 of the late Printed Assemblies.



Printed in the Year 1673.



*A REPLY to the ANSWER given  
to the LETTER, directed by the PRO-  
TESTERS to their BRETHREN,  
&c.*

REVEREND BRETHREN,

**T**Owards the rising of our last Meeting at Edinburgh, there was transmitted to us from you, by the hand of one of your number, a Reply to the Letter which we had formerly written to you, concerning your present way; and finding, that not only your own positive and expresse desires, do call for an Answer to many particulars contained therein; but also you did send it abroad in Printing within very few dayes after the first Copie thereof came to our hands; Therefore in order to your satisfaction, and our own vindication, we found our selves engaged to make you this return.

**W**E wish that as to the way of your Answer unto us, you had been more open and clear; ours unto you was subscribed by one of our number in name of all the rest, yours unto us comes unsubscribed, and without shewing us expressly in whose name it is; and when we desire to know it from the Reverend brother of your number, who did transmit it unto us, as he had in the first conveyance declared it not to be his own, so did he afterwards refuse to shew us from whom it is; Yet because it was sent by the Moderator of your last Assembly and present Commission, inclosed in a Letter of his own to one of our number, desiring him to communicate it unto the rest of our Meeting; and because all along it speaks as in the name of you all, who are for the Publick Resolutions, and the authority

thority of these two late Assemblies at *Dundee* and *Edinburgh*, and sometimes with solemn asseverations and oaths, which we think no conscientious man will take upon him to do, if he were not thereunto warranted and allowed by others in whose name he speaks; therefore we conceive that we may look upon it, and the things that are contained therein, as the common answer and judgment of the generality of these of your way.

Before we speak to the matter contained therein, we desire to remove out of the way two prejudices that seem to stick with you in reference to our last. One is, That (as you alleadge) Copies thereof were spread before it came to your hands; if any thing of that kind was done, is more then was warranted by us, yes, then we know; we were so little industrious in making it publick, that very few of our own number had a Copy of it, untill all the Copies designed for you were first delivered; and we cannot learn that such as had them, have been any way active in spreading of them. The other is, that you seem to us to conceive, That we would fasten all the guilt of the Land-destroying sins upon you, and take no share thereof to our selves: If that were the question, whether both of us be guilty of these sins that have procured and brought on, and do continue these sad judgments upon the Land, we would deny what our own consciences daylie speak unto us, if we did refuse to acknowledge our selves to be among the most guilty. For our sin also in all relations and stations, is all this wrath upon the Land; and that we speak to you of sin and guiltinesse, is not to justify our selves, but from an earnest desire to have all these things searched and known, and taken with, for which the Lord contends both with you and with us, and with all the Inhabitants of the Land, that the same being repented of, his wrath may be turned away.

Now we come unto the matter of your Answer, and upon the whole, it is unto us matter of sorrow and wonder, that all your proceedings from the first to the last, since the laying of the mournfull foundation of these sad Resolutions at *Perth* unto this day, in all your acts and actings, are owned, and defended, and endeavoured to be justified in every title thereof. We grieve for it, because it is more deeply ingraven upon our spirits, and upon the spirits of many of the godly throughout the Land, then that it can be easily detested, that for these things the Lord is wroth, and continues to contend;



rend; His Word cries, *Hast thou not procured this unto thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way, and now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or, what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? thy own wickednesse shall correct thee, and thy back-slidings shall reprove thee; Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts: Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned: Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria, yea thou shalt go forth from him, and thy hands upon thy head, for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them. How sad is it when the Prophets do not discover Zion's iniquity, to turn away her captivity. We wonder at it, because we know not how to reconcile it with the language of sundry able and gracious men, whom you account to be of your way, who both to our selves and others, (whose report doth deserve to be trusted,) do disallow and condemn many of these things, the whole bulk whereof, without excepting of any thing, ye do justifie and defend in your Answer; such as your Warning at *Pearth* the 26. of *March* 1651. in which you apply the characters of Malignants formerly given by this Church to your Brethren; who then were bearing testimony against the Publick Resolutions. The Act of the Commission at *Pearth* about the same time, appointing such to be censured by their respective Presbyteries; the Act and Letter of the Commission in *May* thereafter, appointing such to be cited to the General Assembly; the censures inflicted upon the Brethren by that Assembly at *Dundee*; the Acts of that Assembly for censuring all those who do not acknowledge the authority, and submit to the Acts and Constitutions thereof; The Act at *Edinburgh* for removing these Ruling Elders from Presbyteries and Synods, and excluding these Expectants from the Ministry, who refuse to passe from the Protestation, &c. and severall other things in your Papers and Proceedings.*

The first particular which we take notice of, is, That though you do not purge these of your judgment from prejudices and jealousies, yet you are pleased to alleadge, that our way doth free them  
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being altogether groundlesse, yea that there is great ground of jealousy given by these of our judgment, by severall things in our carriage; but when we have seriously considered our own carriage, we do not find it justly lyable to such a charge, least of all can we judge it so, because of bearing testimony against that which is in controversy betwixt you and us, and accompting the publick and profess'd Authors and Abettors thereof, in so far scandalous, we see it to involve sin, and a course of declining from the Lord, and though we were fewer then we are, and as destitute of power as you give us out to be, yet we would conceive our selves bound to speak this much, no lesse now, then if we had all that fulnesse of power which you do imagine us to aime at; we desire not to be led by that spirit, nor to act by that printiple, which teacheth men to speak one thing when they are high, and another when they are low; but you have in this clause handsomely wrapt up one of these mysteries which makes many of your number (who can hardly abide the tryall in other things) uncontravertably censurable; plead for the Publick Resolutions; and the two late Meetings at *Dundeer* and *Edinburgh*, as for life and death, and to be averse from union with us, as that which may prove hurtfull to themselves: If the work of purging the Lords House of scandalous and corrupt Officers, once happily begun in this Land, should be again set on foot, this is the wofull jealousy that harbours in many breasts, and doth oft times break out from their mouthes; concerning which we dare not say, that they are altogether therein mistaken, for though we accompt many of these who are for the Publick Resolutions, very worthy of a room and place in the House of GOD, as men eminent both for graces and gifts, and heretofore much blessed of the Lord, to be very instrumentall in the Work of Reformation; which glory we hope he will yet give unto them to regain, though now in the deeps of his wisdom they be for a little over-taken in a temptation, yet our being few in number, and destitute of power, doth not hinder us ingenuously to profess, that if the Lord shall thereunto call us, we would think it our duty to be as forward and zealous in purging of his House as ever; but that we have any unwarrantable aims or designs for attaining and investing our selves with power for that end (as you do insinuat) is more then our own hearts charge us with, or you or any other are able to make good: If we were as am-

bitious

bitions in our desires; and as undertaker in our doings as some give us  
 out to be, we might haply before this time have had and exercised  
 as much power as might have brought some of these mens fears up-  
 on them; but we desire to fear GOD, and to wait upon him in his  
 own way. Whether groundlesse Jealousies, and alienation of mindes  
 and affections have so far prevailed with you, as to make you reject  
 clear and evident truths concerning the Lords controversie with the  
 Land, we shall not now further presse, but leave it unto him unto  
 whom you appeal, who (as he is the searcher of hearts) so will he  
 make every mans work manifest, that all the Churches may know,  
 that it is he who searcheth the heart and the reins. By the truths  
 that are rejected, we do indeed mean these that are in controversie  
 and debate betwixt you and us, if they be not clear and evident  
 truths to you, yet doth not that darken the light and lustre thereof  
 in themselves. It is the matter of our mourning, that you who did  
 not long ago walk with us in the same truths, should now account  
 them errors; we know almost no truth that concerns the super-  
 structure of Religion, and the Work of Reformation, that was  
 more generally and harmoniously received, and more commonly and  
 clearly taught by the Church of *Scotland*, then these truths; Yea,  
 we know nothing that was more commonly and clearly taught by  
 many of your selves, and could this end the debate; we would wil-  
 lingly be content to put the issue thereof, not only upon the current  
 and strain of the Publick Papers of the Kirk of *Scotland*, before  
 these your Resolutions, and upon the testimony of the generality of  
 judicious and discerning hearers of the doctrine of the Ministry  
 throughout the Land, but also upon the current and strain of ma-  
 ny of your own Sermons, wherein these Resolutions of yours are  
 as clearly condemned, as in any Papers or Testimonies of ours. What  
 is the judgment of forraign Churches, is not so much of our con-  
 cernment to know, as what hath been the judgment of our own  
 Church, according to the Law and to the Testimony; you cannot  
 be forgetfull, that the Prelates made as great a brag of the judgment  
 of forraign Churches, anent some things then in question, as you do  
 now in this, which yet we speak not as if we did subscribe to that  
 which is sometimes a little too largely asserted by you in this parti-  
 cular, concerning the judgment of forraign Churches, and sound  
 Protestant Divines; learned men among you cannot but know, that  
 instances

instances of famous Protestant Churches, denying liberty to a great  
 many subjects to be employed or intrusted in the defence of the  
 Cause and Kingdom of GOD, can easily be given; and that there  
 are famous Protestant Divines not a few, who are of our judgment  
 and not of yours, in the matter of employing and intrusting such as  
 your Resolutions do warrant to employ and intrust; and that most  
 of these Divines who allow the employing of such, do put in the ex-  
 ceptions of scandall and danger; in which cases they do affirm it to  
 be unlawfull to employ and intrust them, and even upon these,  
 though there were no more, might be also put the issue of the que-  
 stion: Will every tender and conscientious man amongst your  
 selves, speaking to the businesse in cold blood, positively say, that  
 there was no reall scandall nor offence to the people of GOD, nor  
 any reall danger to his Cause, by employing and intrusting that Par-  
 ty? Or will you ever be able to perswade the consciences of the  
 Godly throughout the Land, that there was no scandall nor danger  
 therein? But you desire to know, if ever such Tenets were ven-  
 ted for Truths in any part of the Christian World, as that it is  
 not lawfull for the lawfull Magistrate, to employ the Body of his  
 Subjects for the Lands defence against an unjust Invasion &c. Why  
 you should propound your questions in so high and boasting a way  
 we know not? unless it be to amuse the simple, by making them to  
 believe, that we are venting most strange and uncouth Tenets, the  
 like whereof were never heard in the Christian World; But for  
 our own vindication, and your satisfaction, we desire to tell you,  
 that these Tenets were vented in the Christian World, before these  
 debates betwixt you and us did begin; yea, and once received, and  
 often vented by many of your selves as truth. For the first Tenet,  
 first see the Warning of the Commission of the Generall Assembly,  
 29 June 1654 in the 6. page thereof you will find these words:  
 "It is far from our meaning, that any who are tainted with Malign-  
 "nancie and disaffection to the Work of GOD, should be allowed  
 "or permitted to associat or joyn themselves together, by Parties in  
 "Arms; much lesse do we mean, that we should associat and joyn  
 "with them; or that they should be employed, or made use of, or  
 "countenanced; or permitted to be in our Armies; the Lord hath so  
 "far cleared his mind both by his Word and Works against these  
 "things, that they are very blind who are not convinced herein;  
 "and

"and we have made so solemn publick confession of this sin that re-  
 "lates unto Malignants, and so solemnly engaged our selves against  
 "the same, that they among us who should again hazard upon it,  
 "should seem to be desperately perverse: It were not onely to give  
 "great ground of encouragement to the \_\_\_\_\_, before whom  
 "Malignants have so often fled and fallen, but to discourage the  
 "hearts, and weaken the hands of men of integrity and godlinesse,  
 "who could hardly expect a blessing in the fellowship of such; nay,  
 "it were from the words of our own former Confession and En-  
 "gagement unto duties, to proclaim a Judgment against the Land,  
 "till it were consumed without remedy. We are therefore bold in  
 "the Lords Name, to warn the Honorable Estates of Parliament,  
 "and all whom it concerns in the Land, that they may be far from  
 "such a thing, and that they may take care in their respective places  
 "and Stations, to purge Judicatories and Committees, of all scanda-  
 "lous and disaffected men, and speedily and effectually to go about  
 "the removing and purging out from the Army, all men of a scan-  
 "dalous conversation, and of questionable integrity and affection in  
 "the Cause of GOD, and that they imp'loy none but such as are  
 "of a blamelesse conversation, and of approved integrity in the  
 "Lords Work: It shall be a shame for any in this Land, to be so  
 "faithlesse and unbelieving, as because of the scarcenesse of men, to  
 "make use of others then such as are thus qualified. The Lord hath  
 "not onely spoken it in his Word, and verified it in his Works in the  
 "dayes of old, but hath let us see it with our own eyes, that it is  
 "all one with him to save with few or with many, and that a few  
 "whom GOD wil countenance, are more worth then many, against  
 "whom he hath a controversie. 2. See the Declaration of the Ge-  
 "nerall Assembly it self, *Edinburgh, July 15. 1650.* after the Land  
 "was actually \_\_\_\_\_, page 17. 18. "We exhort all these who are  
 "in publick trust in the Committee of Estates, or otherwayes, not  
 "only to take heed of their private walking, that it be suitable to  
 "the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, and of their families and fol-  
 "lowers, that they be void of offence, but also be streight and  
 "faithfull in the Covenant and Cause of GOD, and not to seek  
 "themselves, nor be-friend any who have been Enemies to the  
 "Lords Work, self-seeking and conniving at, and complying with,  
 "and pleading for Malignants, having been publick sins that have  
 B "been



"Icen often complained of; and we wish to GOD there were no  
 "cause to complain of these things still, notwithstanding of the  
 "solemn confessing of them, and engaging against them. GOD for-  
 "bid that any mock the LORD, he is a severe avenger of all such  
 "things; and there is the more reason at this time not to owne Ma-  
 "lignants, because it is ordinary for men so to be taken with the  
 "sense of the danger that is before them, as not to look back to that  
 "which is behind them. There may be inclinations in some to im-  
 "ploy these men, and make use of their power, that we may be  
 "strengthened thereby in this and in our Neighbour Land; but  
 "GOD hath hitherto cursed all such counsels, and blasted such Re-  
 "solutions; and if we shall again fall into this sin, as our guilt shall  
 "be so much the greater, by reason of many promises and engage-  
 "ments to the contrary; so may we expect a heavier judgment  
 "from the Lord upon it. Let us keep the Lords way, and though  
 "we be few and weak, the Lord shall be with us, and make us to  
 "prosper and prevail: They are not fit for the Work of GOD, and  
 "for the glorious dispensations of his more then ordinary work of  
 "power and providence in these times, who cannot believe nor act  
 "any thing beyond what sense and reason can make clear unto  
 "them; from the beginning to the end of their under-takings; for-  
 "mer experiences and present straits call upon us, that we should  
 "act and follow our duty in such a way as may magnifie the Lord,  
 "and make it known to others that we live by faith. Do not these  
 "passages say, that it was not lawfull for the Magistrate of this Land  
 "at that time to imploy any of these who were tainted with Malig-  
 "nancie and dis-affection to the Cause of GOD for the Lands de-  
 "fence, against an ———— and were there not hundreds and  
 "thousands of such at that time in the Land who were subjects? and  
 "were not you your selves (such of you as were Members of these  
 "Judicatories) concurring and consenting in these Warnings and  
 "Declarations? And did not all or the most of you, read them pub-  
 "lickly in your Congregations? For the second Tenet, to wit, that  
 "we may not be concurring (according to our place) unto the inve-  
 "sting of any with the power of Magistracie, what ever otherwise be  
 "his right unto it, untill he give convincing signes of a reall change.  
 "We may use with you the common Proverb, *Qui versatur in ge-  
 "neralibus, versatur in dolosis*; he that holds himself in generals, doth  
 readily



readily deceive: Therefore for clearing of our selves, and unmasking of you, we desire to put you in mind: 1. That the question betwixt you and us, is not simply concerning the investing of any with the power of Magistracie whatsoever otherwise be his right (as you do expresse it) but concerning the investing of one with the power of Magistracie, who hath been in reall, and profess'd, and avowed opposition, and enimitie to the Work and People of GOD who are to invest him; and hath because thereof, been justly suspended, or justly denied the exercise of his power. Secondly, of the investing of one who by settled transactions and paction betwixt the People and his Predecessours, or by the Laws of the Crown, is bound to be of one perfect Religion with his People. Thirdly, That our question is not of convincing signes of a reall change from nature to grace, (for if that be your meaning, we have hitherto vented no such Tenet; and if you will fasten it upon us, you must tell us where it is to be found in any thing that we have vented) but of convincing signes of a reall change from open and profess'd enimitie and opposition to the Cause and People of GOD, unto the abandoning of former Malignant courses and principles, and giving reall satisfaction to the just and necessary desires of this Kirk and Kingdom, concerning the security of Religion and liberty; and taking it thus, to wit, that we might not have been concurring according to our place, unto the investing of the King with the power of Magistracie, he being engaged in reall and profest and avowed enimitie and opposition to the Work and People of GOD, and thereupon, and upon the paction and laws formerly mentioned, justly denied the exercise of his power, untill he gave convincing signes of his abandoning that enimitie and opposition, and his reall changing from that course and way, to secure and promote the Work, and defend the People of GOD; we do own it, and so also did you once, and the whole Church of Scotland. See the Warning of the Generall Assembly 1649. In which there are six Arguments used and prosecuted at length to prove this point, because it would be tedious to repeat them all, we shall satisfie our selves with the last, and with the conclusion that is drawn from the whole. "It is no new nor strange thing for Kingdoms to preserve Religion and themselves from ruine, by putting restraint upon the exercise of the Power and Government of those who have refused to grant these things that  
 B 2 "were

"were necessary for the good of Religion, and the Peoples safety:  
 "there hath been many presidents of it in this and other Nations of  
 "old, and of late upon these and other important considerations, it  
 "shall be the wisdom of every one who dwells in the Land, to  
 "take heed of such a temptation and snare, that they be not accessory  
 "to any such designs or endeavours, to-wit, ( of bringing the  
 "King to the exercise of his Royall power, before reall satisfaction  
 "obtained from him, to the just and necessary desires of State and  
 "Kirk, concerning the security of Religion, and safetie of his  
 "People, as is exprest in other places of that Warning ) as they  
 "would not bring upon themselves, and upon their families, the  
 "guilt of all the detriment that will undoubtedly follow thereupon  
 "to Religion and the Covenant, and of all the miseries and calamities  
 "that it will bring upon his Majesties Person and Throne, and  
 "upon these Kingdoms; Such a thing by all appearance, would be  
 "the under-mining and shaking, if not the over-throwing and destroying  
 "the Work of Reformation; and therefore whosoever  
 "attempt the same, oppose themselves to the Cause of GOD, and  
 "will at last dash against the Rock of the Lords Power, which hath  
 "broken in pieces many high and loftie ones since the beginning of  
 "this Work in these Kingdoms; and it is unto us a sure word of  
 "promise, that whosoever shall associat themselves, or take counsell  
 "together, or gird themselves against GOD and his Work, shall be  
 "broken in pieces. And again in the same Warning you will finde  
 "this exhortation to the Parliament and their Committees: "And  
 "we trust, that upon the other hand, the sense of their obligation to  
 "GOD, and his Oath that is upon them, will make them constantly  
 "adhere to their former Principles and Resolutions, and desires  
 "concerning Religion and the Covenant, that reall satisfaction  
 "may be had there-ant, before the King be put in the exercise of  
 "his power. And upon the same grounds the Parliament in the  
 "same year 1649. in the moneth of *February*, in their Act anent securing  
 "the Covenant, Religion, and Peace of the Kingdom, did not only enact,  
 "ordain and declare his swearing of the Oath of Coronation, and of the  
 "Oath of Covenant; but also, to give you it in their own words; "It is  
 "declared, enacted and ordained, that before the King who now is,  
 "be admitted to the exercise of his Royall Power, he shall leave all counsell  
 "and counsellours prejudiciall to Religion

"Religion, and to the National Covenant, and to the Solemn League and Covenant. All which they finde themselves bound to prosecute, and resolve not to recede therefrom, but to see the same really performed. By which it appears, that this was no such strange Tenet either in Church or State at that time, as you now give it out to be. The third Tenet which you mention, is, That we hold it to be unlawfull to joyn in Camp-fellowship with these with whom we may have even the nearest Church-fellowship. If this be a Tenet of ours, how can it be that we are so strict in our Church-fellowship as we are given out to be, if we allow even the nearest Church-fellowship to such as we cannot keep Camp-fellowship with. We cannot be very strait laced in Church-fellowship; and there is no great hazard to fear our separating from the Church, because of the want of due qualification in many Members; but this is none of the tenets that is much upon debate between you & us, nothing of it hath issued from any of our Meetings. It's like that you found this Tenet upon some passages of a Reply that was made by one or two of our number, to a Letter written by one of yours, wherein he did labor to convince of the warrantableness of joyning in the Army, notwithstanding of the taking in of these who were formerly excluded, because of their enmity and opposition to the Work of GOD, because they were now admitted to the fellowship of all the Ordinances of the Church; unto which, besides severall considerations that were propounded from the unwarrantableness of admitting them to the fellowship of all Church Ordinances, because of their continuing in their former course of enmity and opposition to the Work of GOD, it was also returned, that there be sundry considerable differences betwixt communicating at one table, and fighting in our Army, which haply might make the one warrantable in some cases, where the other is not, and this which was touched upon the by only, you labour to raise out of it some monstrous and strange Tenet, whereas you know, that little or nothing of the stresse of the difference betwixt you and us, lyes in this, Whether it be lawfull to joyn in Camp-fellowship with all these with whom it is lawfull to joyn in the nearest Church-fellowship, or whether it be lawfull to joyn in Camp-fellowship with wicked men? But whether it be lawfull to joyn in Camp-fellowship with a prevailing Party of Malignant men, continuing in their prophaneness, and enmity and opposition to the Work

Work of GOD, and having the view of Conscience and actions in the Army &c. as it is stated in that Book, containing the Causes of the Lords controversie, you will not only have us to be venters of these, but also of many such like Tenets; but when these other Tenets are brought forth, we are confident that if they be ours, they shall be found justifiable.

Ye all edge that ye know many who looks on the contempt of the Gospel, and oppression, uncleanness, despising of Ordinances, self-seeking under publick pretences, as sins not to be taken notice of in a publick Fast, except these other things under debate, and of lesser moment, what ever truth be in them, be acknowledged also. That any of our judgement do not take notice of these things as Causes both of publick and privat humiliation, we think ye will not say: and if you should, both our known practice, and publick Papers would contradict; yet that we do joyn these other things with them, and blame others for the neglect of it, we have reason so to do, because in these other things, lyes a part of the Lands guiltinesse, and of the Lords controversie; yea, we fear not to say, a great part thereof, though ye do insinuat them to be things of small moment; we know and do acknowledge, that some truths are more important, and some lesse, so be there also degrees of sin and of guiltinesse: but it hath been one of the wiles of Satan very often, and particularly in the time of this Lands last defection under the Prelats to blunt mens zeal for controverted truths, and to keep them from the sense of errors opposite thereunto, by lessening the weight thereof, and holding them forth to be of small moment; So do we conceive our selves bound to endeavor to discern the times by knowing both the sin and duty thereof; Did these gracious men who are now at rest in the Lord, and some who yet live among your selves, look upon the increase of Poperie, and ignorance and prophanity, and contempt of the Gospel, as sins not worthy to be taken notice of in a publick Fast in the time of Prelacie, because they would have had the usurpation of the Government of the Kirk, the civill places and power of Kirk-men, the Ceremonies and these things (which the Prelats called truths of lesser moment) joyned with them, as Causes of the Lords wrath: It was the Prelats charge then, as well as yours against us now; and the same answer that sundry of your selves then framed to it, being impartially applyed, will serve us in stead now;

now: Ye are glad how freely we do acquit our selves, according to our vocation, to all men; and are confident, when that, which we have done to others in this Land, shall be made as publick as this to you hath been a long time since, it will speak for it self; If we have in our dealing with others, transgressed the bounds of our Vocation, why do not you tell us plainly, and not by halfe? Why do you give us occasion to allude unto JESUS CHRIST'S complaint in the Gospel, *that you will neither enter in your selves, nor suffer others to enter*; you will neither witnesse your selves, nor suffer others to witnesse; what we have done to others, was made as publick as what we have done unto you: The truth is, our care was, that neither of them should be made publick, untill they first came into the hands of these to whom they were directed, and that we knew what we might expect concerning your Answer; and if any to whom either the one or the other was not primarily intended, did sooner get a Copy, it cannot be imputed to us who had no hand therein; but it seems by your own verdict thereof, that there was as little care to keep the one from publick view as the other, otherwise how could you have known it to speak with such confidence of it? As ye are confident, so also are we, that it will speak for it self; though belike not the same way, nor upon the same ground; but it shall be time for us to answer accusations when they are brought against us, either in that, or any thing else, though yet we desire without boasting to say, that we did neither stand in awe of man, nor seek to please men, but did walk in the simplicity of our hearts, without detaining the truth of GOD in unrighteousness, in the things which this Land hath cause to complain of in regard of Religion or Liberty.

" Ye are sorry that we labour to fasten upon you the hindring  
 " of so good a Work as the purging of the House of GOD, and  
 " tel us, that we know that the weakening of your authority makes  
 " purging work for the time but very little usefull, &c. Before we  
 return you an answer to this part of your Letter that concerns the  
 purging of the Lords House, we beg leave to tel you, that it was our  
 desire to have heard your thoughts upon what we said unto you in  
 ours: That the time was not long since all that feared GOD in the  
 Land, were of one heart, and one way, against Adversaries on either  
 hand, and oh that it were his good will and pleasure, to unite us again  
 upon the same principles, for carrying on the Lords Work, as hereto-  
 fore.



fore. We suppose you will not charge us with departing from that one heart, and one way, that was among the searers of GOD in this Land against Malignants, and we would know how you would exeeem your selves from that charge. It is undeniable, that since these Resolutions, ye have had little or no exercise of this heart, and of this way, and your plea must be, that you do not, nor need not kythe your zeal against Malignants, because there be few or none in the Land, we mean, such as are malignant in their course: If it were so, happy *Scotland* notwithstanding of all its calamities; but though you have endeavoured to bury the name under the rubbish of your rash resolutions, and their rash repentance, yet many of these that fears GOD in the Land, do bear testimony, that their malignancie and enmity, so far as their power can reach, is as great in most part of them now, as ever. We confesse, that among all our stumblings at your present way, this is one of the greatest, that you have suffered that great Adversary the Malignant to fall through your fingers, which makes us more then afraid, that ye are agreed with him; how can two walk together unlesse they be agreed. Surely, either he is not, which to us is to deny sense, or else he hath charmed you into silence, and would you let us again hear your voyce concerning this thing, we are hopefull that it might be very inductive to agree us in all things else. Concerning the purging of the Lord's House. 1. Ye do not deny that it is obstructed and retarded, and we do indeed believe, that very few, if any instances can be given amongst you these three years, of your putging of any scandalous or corrupt Minister out of the House of GOD; unlesse you call these such who have opposed the Publick Resolutions. But you excuse your selves. 1. By the weakening of your authority, then by mens being taught (we know say ye by whose example) to submit no further to Kirk censures, nor what seems good unto themselves. 3. By this, that it will be to little purpose, till it have Union going before it; All these three did the Prelats shelter themselves with, in the matter of the purging of the Lord's House of insufficient and scandalous men in their time. They cryed out, that the Churches authority was weakened, because their own authority was not acknowledged. They alleadged that the Puritane or non-conform Ministers, not submitting to their censures, taught scandalous men the same lesson: That it would be to small purpose to essay to purge the Church, till once the Ministry were



were united among themselves, whilst yet there was another thing in the bottom, it would have made them ride with a thinner back, and so would purging work make you, if it were impartially followed. But to the particulars: It is not weakening of lawful authority, to disclaim and decline usurped authority, and these who refuse to submit to the unjust censure of these who have no just power to censure, do not teach any not to submit to the just censures of just powers; and to say nothing, that the declining of your authority hindered not you to proceed against diverse of our number, yea, was the cause why you proceeded against them; have you not even since your last Assembly proceeded against sundry Ruling Elders, upon the account of their refusing of the Overture of your last Assembly at *Edinburgh*. Next, if none of these who acknowledge all the authority you pretend unto, and plead zealously for it, needed to be brought under the tryall; or if any of them being tryed and censured, had refused to submit, you might with some more colour of reason have pleaded this, but as long as they acknowledge your authority, it will not bear weight with men of understanding; We do in some measure believe, that before a right and well-grounded Union, essays of purging would not be to so great purpose as were to be wished, because the sons of *Zeruah* would be too hard for the *David's* that are among you, without the help of your old friends; this many conscientious men among you know and do acknowledge, and these others also are so smelling of the hazard, that we mistake if ever they willingly or cordially condescend to an Union, except upon such an act of oblivion as reaches further then the Publick Resolutions; yea, why should want of union with us hinder essays of purging among your selves? We profess, that to us it would be a very persuasive argument to Union, to see you purging ignorant and scandalous Elders out of your Sessions; and insufficient, scandalous, corrupt Ministers out of the Presbyteries where you have power: Will you once give us a proof of your care and faithfulness, and zeal this way, in this uncontroverted and necessary duty, that we may know that the same spirit possesseth you, which formerly we saw in many of you, to our very great rejoicing and comfort.

We in our Letter unto you, as we did lament that the work of purging the Lord's House was obstructed, so also that too many

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Ministers

Ministers of the Land do repent of what hath been formerly done therein. To this, your Answer is so far from satisfying us, that it doth rather confirm us in our former regrave. 1. You faintly tell us; that you know not who these are that repents of the by-past work of purging. If it were pertinent and to edification, we could tell you of a good many of your number by name and surname, who have openly in Synods and Presbyteries, and Companies and Conferences, declared their dislike of their dis-satisfaction with it; and the thing being so open and common, how you should not know some of them, is to us somewhat strange; but if there be none such among you, or if you think that there should be none such among you, it will contribute for our satisfaction, and for the satisfaction of many gracious persons in the Land, who are much stumbled with the murmurings of many Ministers against that Work, that such of you as are now come together, will issue a Declaration, or give some standing testimony, importing a cordiall approbation of what was done before the year 1650. in purging of the Ministry, and characterizing and marking these who speak against the same, as thus far enemies to the Work of Reformation. You subjoyn, that possibly some conceive an inconvenient and danger to continue it in the same way wherein it was formerly used. But for what? you know none that is against the thing it self; who is come to that height of impudency as to professe to be against the thing it self, that is, to purge out scandalous and corrupt Ministers in generall? Would any of the Prelats have profest to be against the thing it self? But your yeelding it possibly (you might have said more then probably) some conceive an inconvenient and danger to continue it in the same way wherein it was formerly used; and your subjoyning immediatly, *That it may prove hazardous indeed, to give unto a Quorum of some few men (most of them being very young in experience, and unacquainted with our Discipline) a constant power renewed from time to time, to sit down upon whole Synods and Presbyteries, to cast out and hold in whom they please, is to us, and we believe also unto others, a very clear evidence that there is amongst you a dislike of the way that was formerly used, and that it is looked upon as that which included a constant power given to a Quorum of some few men (most whereof were very young in experience, and unacquainted with our Discipline)*

to sit upon whole Synods and Presbyteries, and to cast out and hold in whom they pleased; and what is this but the very language which disaffected and scandalous Ministers, and others scandalous and disaffected persons spoke concerning the Commissioners appointed by the Assembly, before these Resolutions, and to reason from the cause to the effect, what is this but to condemn their proceedings, and what they did in purging of the Kirk; for if they were but a Quorum of few men, most whereof were not only young, but very young in experience, and also unacquainted with our Discipline, and had power to cast out, and hold in at their pleasure, what good fruit could be expected of such ignorant, unexperienced Novices; and therefore seeing it is undeniable, that they did much, and removed many, doth it not to any rational man in your construction probably follow, That much of what they did was amiss; the danger and inconvenience whereof would be guarded against for the time to come. Thus from day to day, one part of the Work of Reformation after another is weakened and spoken against, and cryed down and declined from, and yet few can endure to hear of any declining or defection. We did not say, that *Ezekiel* threatneth the neglecting of purging onely by such a mean as this, and therefore need not be at the pains to make it appear. We conceive his threatning to strike against the neglect of every lawfull mean, whether this or any other; we did not speak of the means, but of the matter, and if that be neglected after the Lord's so much calling for it, and essaying by the endeavours of many of his servants, even many of your selves as well as others, we conceive the citation of this place is to good purpose.

The great work of the books that we recommend to you, is to lay open the causes of that dreadful wrath that is gone forth from the Lord against this Nation and Church, whether the sinfulness of the Treaty, the Publick Resolutions, &c. or any other that we could attain the knowledge and discovery of; and though we dare not conceal it, that we conceive that the LORD hath been grievously provoked by that Treaty, and these Resolutions, yet do we not so speak of them as if there were no sin besides that, hath influence upon our present judgment. You know that the greater part of the enquiry both in the causes of wrath against the Land, and in that concerns Ministers, is spent in laying open other sins. Besides

these, we did in order to your conviction in these things, recommend unto you the Covenants, the Engagements, Remonstrances, Warnings, and Declarations, rather then use any arguments of our own, because we thought these spoke clearly to the purpose, and would bear greater weight with you, then any arguments of ours. That we did not mention the Word of GOD, ye need not wonder, It was because we conceived the determination of these things to be already holden forth from, and according to the Word in the other which we did mention. But if this be a fault, we are content to mend it, and beseeches you most earnestly ( if it may be taken off our hands without prejudice or mistake ) to search in the Book of the LORD, what inhibitions, exhortations, threatnings and judgments are written there against compliances with wicked men, and what sad and dreadfull consequences have followed thereupon. But you tell us <sup>3</sup>, *That you have perused many of all these which we recommend, and most of all the word of truth, and cannot find from all, or any of these, that sinfulness in these things which we charge them with.* We wish you had also told, whether ye do find from all or any of these, any sinfulness in these things at all, though you did not attain the same discovery we speak of, yet if ye did attain any measure, it will be plain dealing before the Lord, and much for your Brethrens satisfaction, and for removing the stumbling of many of the godly, to speak it out; and if you attain none, but that you think all these things justifiable in all things ( as it seems by this Letter you do ) ye will do well also to let us know it.

You find the Treaty with the King approved by Covenant, Remonstrances, and Declarations; and if we had cited any of these passages seemingly against it, ye would have cited ten really for it. It was not our purpose so much to argue, as to exhort, & therefore we did not cite passages, but left them to your selves to be considered, how the Covenant did approve the Treaty with the King, or what these multitudes of passages be in the Remonstrances and Declarations of the Kirk that are really for it, we profess we do not know; all the question lyes in this, Whether the King was to be agreed with, to be invested in his Kingly power, without his giving cordiall and reall satisfaction to the just and necessary desires of this Kirk and Kingdom, concerning Religion and Liberty; That such an agree-  
ment

ment should not have been made without his cordial and  
 reall satisfaction; we have already shewen from the doctrine of this  
 Church, and the Laws of the Land; and that reall satisfaction was  
 not obtained, we have demonstrated in that Book of the Causes of  
 the Lords controversie, by many clear evidences of the King's clea-  
 ving to his former principles, and continuing in his former course of  
 Magnanicy and disaffection to the Work and People of GOD:  
 concerning the truth of which point, we appeal to the knowledge  
 and conscience of many amongst your selves.

You also are pleased to say, that you find the Publick Resolu-  
 tions also approved by these, and then set down what these Resolu-  
 tions are, in relating of which you are (to say no more) favourable  
 to your selves and your own way. But to passe this, why is it that  
 these Resolutions being so much questioned as contrary to these,  
 that you have not (after all your inquiry) cited so much as one  
 passage of these by which these your Resolutions are approved;  
 but that the first of these Answers concerning the constitution of  
 the Army, as contrary to former Warnings and Declarations, ap-  
 pears from these passages which we have cited already, with which  
 (though men may bridle and seek evasions) yet it is impossible  
 to reconcile them, and that the last also taken upon the matter, and  
 cloathed with all the circumstances, is contrary to former Warn-  
 ings and Declarations, we trust shall be no great difficulty to make  
 it appear, though indeed we do not deny, that the Commission did  
 herein walk more cautelously, we dare not say, more ingeniously  
 herein, then in the former. For the present we shall only pose you  
 this one question, and desire you for your own clearing, and our sa-  
 tisfaction, to answer it candidly and freely unto us, Whether ye did  
 not know that there was a leading Party in the Court and Com-  
 mittee of Estates and Parliament, of men formerly disaffected, who  
 were really designing, and effectually to their power endeavouring  
 the rescinding of the Act of Classes, and the bringing into the Judi-  
 catories even such as had been eminent and constant opposers of  
 the Cause and Covenant, from the beginning until of late, and were  
 prime and active Instruments in the bloody Rebellions within this  
 Kingdom: and whether ye did not know that your Answer con-  
 cerning the Parliaments dispensing with the time of their being ex-  
 cluded, would not contribute for the rescinding of the Act, and  
 bringing

bringing in these who were acknowledged. If ye did not really know  
 what needed all your prayers and exorts, before you  
 would give your Answer, which yet was but as *Sampson's* ropes,  
 or as the Prelats caveats in the time of the last declining of the  
 Land. Since the Commission saw the designe, and might also have  
 seen the danger, it had been more faithful, and better suited  
 with former Declarations and Warnings, to have warned freely  
 against it, and to have kept their hands free of loosing the cords  
 of that Act, then to have done as they did; but it was resolved, and  
 therefore behoved to be done *vis et modo* but not otherwise.

Ye are pleased to acknowledg, that *what the Commission did in re-  
 ceiving of Malignants gave forth a black signe of repentance,*  
*ye find it to be justified by the Acts of preceding Assemblies, espe-  
 cially the Assembly 1649. where many of our judgments did sit in*  
*Ad. m. r. r.* We do acknowledge, that many of our judgments did  
 sit as Members of that Assembly; but that the proceedings of the  
 Commission 1650, in trying and receiving the repentance of Ma-  
 lignants, is justified by the Acts of that Assembly, We cannot be  
 persuaded as unto many of them, the Assembly 1649, was re-  
 sponsible of Malignants perjurings in the matter of their re-  
 pentance of before, and very apprehensive of doing the like in time  
 coming; and therefore lest GOD should be mocked, or his Kirk  
 deceived, were carefull to guard against it; The words of their  
 Acts be these: "And because many have hitherto made shew  
 "and profession of their repentance, who were not convinced of  
 "their guiltiness, nor humbled for the same; but did thereafter re-  
 "turn With the dog to the vomit, and with the sow to the puddle,  
 "unto the mocking of GOD, and the exceeding great reproach  
 "and detriment of his Cause; Therefore, for the better determi-  
 "ning the truth and sincerity of the repentance of these who desire  
 "to be admitted to the Covenant and Communion: It is appoin-  
 "ted and ordained, That none of these persons who are debarred  
 "from the Covenant and Communion, shall be admitted and re-  
 "ceived there, but such as after exact tryall shall be found for  
 "some competent time before or after the offer of their repen-  
 "tance, according to the discretion of the respective Judicatories, to  
 "have in their ordinary conversation given real testimony of their  
 "disuse of the late unlawfull Engagement, and of the courses and  
 "wayes



"ways of Malignants, & of their sorrow for their accession to the  
 "same, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly*; and if any shall  
 "be found who after the defeating of the Engagers, have uttered  
 "any Malignant speeches, tending to the approbation of the late  
 "unlawfull Engagement, or the blood-shed within the Kingdom,  
 "for promoting the ends of the said Engagement, or any other  
 "projects or practices within or without the Kingdom, prejudi-  
 "ciall to Religion and the Covenant, or tending to the reproach  
 "of the Ministry, or the Civil Government of the Kingdom, or  
 "who have unnecessarily or ordinarily conversed with Malignant,  
 "and disaffected persons, or who have had hand, or accession to, or  
 "compliance with, or have any wayes countenanced or promoted  
 "any malignant design, prejudiciall to the Covenant and Religion,  
 "that those ( notwithstanding their profession of repentance ) be  
 "not suddenly received, but a competent time ( according to the  
 "discretion of the Judicatory ) be assigned to them, for tryall of  
 "the evidence of their repentance, according to the qualification  
 "above-mentioned. Can ye say in your consciences before the  
 L O R D, that the rule was followed by the Commission? Did  
 the Commission find, that all those whom they received, did in  
 their ordinary conversation, give real testimony of their dislike of  
 the Engagement, and wayes and courses of Malignants, and that  
 they did *live soberly, righteously and godly*? or, did they keep the  
 rule here provided by the Assembly, That if any shall be found, who  
 after the defeating of the Engagement, have uttered any malignant  
 speeches? &c. or, who have had hand in, or accession to, or compli-  
 ance with, or have any wayes countenanced or promoted any mali-  
 gnan design, prejudicial to Religion & the Covenant, that these (not-  
 withstanding their profession of repentance) be not suddenly recei-  
 ved, &c. Why then did the Commission ( after they had first and  
 before these Resolutions, made an Act suspending these who had  
 involved themselves in a new Rebellion in the North, after *Dum-*  
*bar*, from being received till the next Generall Assembly, make an-  
 other Act after the taking of these Resolutions, for present receiv-  
 ing of them upon the profession of their repentance: Can this be  
 justified by the Act of the Generall Assembly 1649. But you find  
 that that Assembly did injoyne the Commission to proteste these  
 who were upon the unlawfull Engagement, even to excommunica-  
 tion,

tion, if they did not offer signes of repentance: What then ? doth this Iustifie either their hypocritick offer, or the Commissions receiving thereof without due tryall? We think you will not say it doth. You also find the Assembly 1650. walking by the same steps, in receiving them to the communion of the Church, that we do easily believe. But that the Commission of the Assembly 1650. after the Publick Resolutions, walked in the steps either of the one Assembly or the other, that we doubt. Your great plea is, *that nothing to the contrary was made known, and that cannot be made good, that they were notoriously unto the Judicatory who received them walking in their accustomed prophanesne and enimity to the work of GOD*: But note the Act of the Assembly 1650. provides, that the Judicatory who received them, should (after exact tryall) know and find them to be such as had in their ordinary conversation given real testimony of their dislike of the late unlawfull Engagement, and of the courses and wayes of Malignants, and of their sorrow for their accession to the same, and to *live soberly, righteously and godly*: All this ye restrain to their not notoriously knowing that they were walking in their accustomed prophanesne and enimity to the Work of GOD, whereas ye cannot but know, that that which the Act of the Assembly requires, is of much larger extent then that, and therefore (which we doubt not but many of your selves do remember) the Commission of the Generall Assembly before these Resolutions, were not satisfied with negative testimonies from Presbyteries, concerning the carriage of such as lived in their bounds, but before their admitting and receiving of any, besides the tryall that they did take of themselves, did require positive testimonials concerning their carriage, according to the Act of the Assembly 1649, so that albeit all this which ye alledge were true, yet that doth not free the Commission from blame, in receiving these mens repentance; but besides this, there were very probable and pregnant tokens known to the Judicatories who did receive them, that the generality of them were yet in their former malignancy and prophanity. r. Their frequent relapses and recidivations into that sin, after many most solemn professions, voves and engagements, and oaths to the contrary: Will ye deny that they had oftner then once before that time, deceived both Kirk and State? and that they did seek opportunities and advantages in doing

doing mischief? and that they were no longer bound then they could loose themselves. Did not many of these who a little before *Dumbar*, upon the Kings coming in, profess their repentance, and did under their hands subscribe, That if thereafter at any time they should be found to promote any malignant designe or course, that they should justly be accounted perfidious Covenant-breakers, and despisers of the Oath of GOD, and proceeded against with the highest censures of the Kirk, a little thereafter brake out in a new Rebellion. 2. That most of them did make no offer of their repentance, untill the Treaty with the King was like to settle and close, or else that they were thereunto constrained by the censures of the Kirk proceeding against them. 3. That the offers of their repentance were attended with passionate desires of places and preferment in the Army and Judicatories, and with their retarding of the Leavies, and of the Marchings and Actings of the Army, untill all legal impediments were taken out of the way, that kept them out of places of power and trust. 4. It was commonly reported through all the Land, among all sorts of persons, both well-affected and ill-affected, both Ministers and Professors, that most of these men were continuing in their former dispositions and wayes, when they were offering their repentance, which we think, your selves will not deny. And might not these things, and such things as these, which were notoriously known to the Commission, being put together, have made them more tender and circumspect in admitting these men to repentance? The truth is, that the satisfying of Court-desires and Court-designs, together with the too pressing apprehensions of the need of their help upon the one hand; and the avoiding the dint of the objection of imploying and intrusting them without repentance upon the other, made this sinfull haste. Ye ask, *If there was any of the whole bulk of them Whom any of us did admonish, and for their pertinacy delated them to the Church as obstinate, which ought (say ye) to have been first done, before we had thus charged Christs Court with prostituting the Ordinance of Repentance unto the lusts of corrupt men.* What though none of them had been admonished or delated by us, doth that excuse the Commission, whose duty and place it was, diligently to have inquired after these things? But there were of the whole bulk of them whom we did admonish, and there were Publick Re-

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presen-

presentations made unto the Commission by sundry of our number, concerning their continuing in their former way, and the stumbling that was generally amongst the godly at their receiving. That severals of these whom the Commission did then receive, have since proclaimed their dissimulation (you think) reflecteth no more upon you, nor the carriage of diverse of our judgement, who have trod in the same steps with them of late, doth reflect upon us. If any had been received by us unto the profession of repentance, and since that time proclaimed their dissimulation by treading of these steps, ye might have made such a paralell; but it is like, you mean of these who were engaged with us in the Protestation, whose case is yet very unlike as to the purpose whereto you bring it. 1. Because when we admitted them to engage with us, they were such as till that time, were of unquestionable integrity and affection to the Cause of GOD, and of a blamelesse and Christian conversation. 2. Because they are not one to twenty. 3. Because though there be much sin, yet there is no such dissimulation in their course.

The sinfull courses which we meant which were taken to promote these Publick Resolutions, were not only these that were instanced in the Letter, but also such as were previous thereto, such as the tampering in the Treaty, the driving a design to bring in the Malignants, the pretending a necessity for effectuating of it, the making Acts in the Commission and Parliament against the opposers of it from judging thereof in the Assembly, and such like. Ye justify the censure imposed by you upon Ministers, as also the Acts at *Dundee* from preceding Acts and Practices of our Kirk in such like cases. But there was no such like case in this Kirk, unlesse it was the case of non-conformity, and that will be no good plea for you; We know you mean of the Acts at *Glasgow* 1638, against the Prelats, and these who refuse to subscribe the Covenant, or to acknowledge the Assembly. But these are very unlike cases, as is more fully shewen in some Observations upon your Acts. Ye will not admit that ye know, that ignorant, prophane Elders, are brought in upon Church-Judicatories, and plead that you do not justify it, and whosoever doth it, hath no Warrant from the late Assemblies: We do indeed think, that there be not a few among you, who do not so know it, as to be accessory to the particulars,  
and

and who will be so far from justifying of it, that they will endeavour the remedy thereof; but as we cannot think so of all, not only because we know the contrary, but also because we see them keep in many ignorant and prophane Elders, so we cannot yeeld unto you, that they have no encouragement from the two late Assemblies so to do; Because these Assemblies by allowing the Magistrate to intrust Malignants and scandalous persons, hath some way encouraged Ministers to do so also. 2. Because these Assemblies by warranting the excluding of able and gracious Elders, because of their non-conformity in judgment with the Publick Resolutions, encourage corrupt Ministers to bring in such ignorant and scandalous Elders, that gracious and well-qualified Elders are removed and kepted out from Church-Judicatories, and gifted and gracious men debarred from entring the Ministry, and a door opened to others loose and prophane, you do not deny, but excuses and extenuate the same. 1. By shewing us, that these who are for the Assembly, have not rigidly executed the Acts of the late Assembly at *Edinburgh*, which you know to be the ground of our challenge. It is true, that some of your number are so far convinced of the iniquity of that Act, that we believe, they both have been, and will be so far from the rigide execution thereof, that they think it should not have been made, nor be executed at all; But the greater part are of another mind, and their practice in severall Synods and Presbyteries, hath been accompanied both with rigidity and unreasonableness in these particulars: We may put you in mind, that in *November* last, your Commission it self, under all their professions of condescendencie, yet in their Letter to Presbyteries, made an exception of the execution of this Act; but it seems you do not mean to vindicate your selves simply in this thing, but comparatively in regard of us; in which comparifon you are so large, that (to the utmost of our knowledge) though we presume to know somewhat of the estate of these things, you have exceeded both in regard of the numbers of the Elders of your judgment who are removed, and Expectants of our judgment who have been admitted; can you give us one instance of one Elder removed by us upon this accompt, because he is of your judgment; but your selves know, that we can give you many instances of Elders removed, and endeavoured to be removed, simply upon this accompt, because they

are against the Publick Resolutions, and do not acknowledge the two late Assemblies; or how many instances of Expectants of our judgment admitted to the Ministry, without opposition upon your part, where there was any feasible access thereunto; but because many Elders of your judgment, who have sitten in Sessions these many years by-past, without any endeavor to have them changed, are now removed by us ( few or none of them being legally processed ) therefore ye do asert, that for no other reason you have had, are they removed off, except for their judgment in the present controversie. The Apostle saith, that *Charity thinks not evil*; seeing there is no legall processe, nor any judicall Declaration of the cause of their removall, why should ye conclude it to be, because they are of your judgment. The truth is, it is not so, where ever we know an Elder to be able and gracious, though he be of your judgment, we think him much more worthy of his room then another of our own judgment that is ignorant and scandalous. Concerning this businesse of the change of Elders, so far as it hath proceeded among us, we give this true and ingenuous accompt, We are convinced in our hearts before the Lord, and we believe also, so be many of you, That one of the great evils that hath these years past, afflicted the Kirk of *Scotland*, and obstructed Reformation, hath been the great multitude of ignorant, insufficient, & scandalous Elders, which made us resolve to endeavour so far as we could attain it, the remedy of this evil, in the Congregations where we have any power; And because legall processes would have proven tedious and difficult, when there was just ground for them, especially in a time of such distraction and confusion; therefore the change of Elders being ordinary and agreeable to the rule and practice of our Discipline, a change hath been made in severall of our Congregations, which yet alas, is but a very small part of that which the Lord calls unto; That it was not sooner done, though we may say, that it was much in our desire, and some measure in our endeavours, yet we dare not herein purge our selves from guilt, and we think that neither will ye: This principle and inducement, it was ( to wit ) to have ignorant and scandalous Officers ( scandalous we mean upon uncontroverted grounds ) removed out of the Lord's House, that hath led us in sundry places to the change of Elders; If it hath so fallen out, that many of these have been of your



your judgment, it is our grief that we should have such ground and cause to lay aside many of your judgment upon; We hope never to quarrell with you for laying aside any of our judgment upon this accompt, but shall look upon it as your duty, and the Churches mercy. Who these *gracious young men* are of whom ye speak of, whose *credit and reputation is blasted, and their names traduced, unto the discouraging of many otherwise willing, gracious and able*, we cannot conjecture, unlesse you mean of some whose violent entry by the smaller part of the Presbytery, and over the belly of the greatest part of gracious persons in the Congregations, some Presbyteries of our judgment have opposed, because of their untender and scandalous carriage; and that this should produce either discouragement or disgrace to others that are gracious, what indifferent man will believe? 2. Ye excuse and extenuate the matter by the Act it self, by comparing it with some Acts made at *Glasgow* 1638, as if the Assembly at *Glasgow* 1638, and the Assembly at *Edinburgh* 1653, were alike; or, are the Publick Resolutions anent the bringing in of the Malignant Party, and the determinations at *Glasgow*, anent the casting out of the Prelatical Party alike; but these Acts are compared in some Observations already made thereupon; and therefore now we shall not further insist upon that.

Ye take a deal of pains to justify the proceeding of the meeting at *Forfar*, to that hight and animosity of spirit, as to denounce *the heavy curse of God against all those who did withdraw their counsels from your Judicatories*, by fetching parallels thereof from the practices of former Assemblies and Comissions in exigencies that were not so extream, particularly from the Solemn Warning 1648, which we have considered, & findes a great difference not only in regard of the matter, but also of the manner, which in that of *Forfar* is such, as that it doth expresse peremptory particular application of *the heavy curse of God to every one that withdraws their counsels from your Judicatories*; but concerning this, we mind not much to contend, it being enough for us, that *the curse causelesse shal not come*; onely we cannot be consenting to your opinion, that none can think otherwise of that Warning of yours, but as seasonable and necessary, except such as think, that after these sad dispensations, men should have willingly given up themselves, the Cause and Kingdom

Kingdom, and all their Interests to the ——— We see no connexion betwixt these. Ye are pleased to call in question, *Whether these Declarations for this Land, and Informations for England against us, were spread and printed;* But ye need not, because we can produce them unto you, printed at *Aberdeen* the day of \_\_\_\_\_ and spread they were before they came into

our hands. We do not now intend to fall on the canvassing of the particular calumnies and reproaches contained against us therein, that being in a good measure done already, and more fully intended hereafter, if the Lord shall give the opportunity; onely, we desire to put you in minde: 1. That in some of your Warnings and Declarations you were pleased so far to traduce and calumniate us, as to apply most of the characters of the Malignants to us, with which sundry able and godly men of your own side were so much stumbled, that they did not only not read these Warnings, but also publickly expressed their dislike of them. 2. That in your Information to *England*, you have spoken so grievously of the best, that if we had not seen it with our eyes, we could hardly have believed, that ever it could have fallen from some of your Pens, or been consented unto by others, the words are, "Yet in these last and perillous times, wherein the spirit of error is wise to palliate his lyes with the pretence of piety, there are among our selves a few unsatisfied (of whom some have been had in high estimation before this time for their works sake, & with whom we have dealt with all tenderness, in the spirit of meekness for their reclaiming) who to the great advantage of the common adversary, & to the weakening of the hands that were at the Work, have opposed these just and necessary Resolutions, and actively obstructed the use of the lawfull and onely likely means left of opposition to the prevailing enemy, setting on foot a State separation, which necessarily tendereth to a Kirk separation. We need not warn you (dear Brethren) who are acquainted with the Policies and Practices of these that among your selves, under the specious name of the godly Party, have carried on a devilish design of undoing Kirk and State, and setting up a boundlesse tolleration and arbitrary Government, to beware of suffering mis-informations from such men to take impression upon you; their activeness at home to sail every wind, and to roll every stone for their own advantage, and prejudice of the Publick, induceth

"induceth to believe, that they have not been idle towards you, but  
 "active by their emissaries & Papers, to abuse you with misreports,  
 "to prepossesse you with prejudices against our proceedings; but we  
 "are confident, that ye who have had so great proof of the faithful-  
 "nesse of the Judicatories of this Kirk, in guarding warily against E-  
 "nemies on both hands, as wel Malignants as ——— have not suf-  
 "fered your selves to believe evil of your Brethren; and we earnest-  
 "ly beseech you to beware, that the trust which any have had from  
 "us, and the estimation they have had among you, while they were  
 "about the discharge of that trust, be not inductive of your being  
 "now deceived by them, whose principles and practices ( what ever  
 "their intentions be ) tend to the giving up of you and us to the  
 "power of the avowed and sworn Enemy of Christ's Kingdom. Is  
 not this Answer of yours come abroad in Print, before many of  
 our number had occasion to see it in write? and within a very few  
 dayes after, you send the first Copy thereof to us: If ye put us to  
 it, we can haply make it appear, that ye have more ready access to  
 the Presse than we have. As to what we charge you with, con-  
 cerning a course of declining, we do not refuse it, and though in  
 your estimation for the present it be unjust, yet when ye shall con-  
 sider it better, we hope the Lord shall give you to see that there  
 was cause, and that we have therein spoken the words of truth  
 and sobernesse, and not propagated opinions by mis-informations.  
 It is indeed easie to deny, that the Work of Reformation hath been  
 shaken, a foundation laid for a conjunction with all parties, and that  
 the present divisions have proceeded from your fore-mentioned  
 actings otherwise then by a harmlesse occasion. But the righteous,  
 whose hearts you have made sad, though the Lord hath not made  
 them sad; and the wicked also, whose hands you have strengthened  
 that he should not return from his wicked way, do witness against  
 you, and your own works also, by your departing from former  
 sound principles, concerning the qualification of these who are to  
 be intrusted with the Work; doth not the intrusting of these who  
 are not of approven integrity & good affection to the cause of God,  
 and of a blamelesse and Christian conversation, make for the shake-  
 ing of the Work of Reformation? And have ye not taught, that  
*such may be trusted and employed?* And doth not the teaching  
 compliance with one adversary, infer compliance with another?

And

And hath your doctrine been no more but the harmlesse occasion of this? Have ye not taught to be agreeable to Scripture, that *a great faction of the sons of Belial, wicked and turbulent persons, may be employed and intrusted for the defence of the Kingdom and of the Cause?* These things divided you. 1. From some truths which you had formerly received and professed, and then from your Brethren, whose desire it is to continue stedfast in the things which they had learned, and were solemnly engaged to maintain and promote. Your expressions in the next Paragraph of your Answer, are so high and solemn, that we desire rather to answer with astonishment and silence, then to reflect thereupon, or upon you therein, and shall only say: 1. How great need had all these who are employed in the Work of the Lord, to walk humbly and straightly, when sad experience proves, that when such turns out of the way, their own apprehensions may be entertained with much perswasion and confidence, and sometimes in some sort of simplicity of heart in you or in us, this must be verified, and we wish, that the Lord of mercy and truth, may in mercy reveal it, where the delusion is, and why the Lord hath for a time suffered it to take place. 2. If these things which you adhere unto, be Scripture truths, consonant to the doctrine of our Church, & never once questioned in any part of the Christian World, then we pray you, that you would give satisfying Answers unto what is taught and holden forth from the Scriptures in the Publick Papers of this Church, especially in the Declaration of the Generall Assembly, and the debates betwixt the Commission and the Parliament, and the Committee of Estates 1648, against these supposed truths; or will ye bring us one clear Text of Scripture precept or precedent, or one passage of the Doctrine of our Kirk, warranting a people professing the faith of Jesus Christ, and solemnly covenanted to GOD as a Nationall Church, to employ and intrust a multitude of wicked men, whose hands had been formerly imbrued with their blood, with the defence of their Lives, Religion and Liberties. We believe that not only the Christian World, but the Nations by that light of Nature which ye so much plead, doth every where question, that the Wolf should get the Wether to keep; We wish that able men among you should employ their gifts and parts better, then to endeavour to maintain such things as these, which have no beauty nor

not necessity, nor usefulness in them; but are like these Kings of ~~Edinburgh~~ that came up last, *ill favoured and lean-fleshed*; but rated up *the good and well favoured King*, and yet did still abide *ill favoured as at the beginning*, and did portend famine and desolation to come upon the Land; so hath these things been attended with darkness and desolation, and confusion and destruction: But if able men among you will still plead for these things, we hope the Lord shall not want witnesses to plead for the truth.

Had you no better answer to our complaint against the unsatisfactoriness of your concessions at *Edinburgh*, then that *ye believe that we will not affirm, that the Assembly did require any approbation from us, either unto the Assembly, or its Acts*. Our complaint was, That the Answer returned to our Propositions, is onely a seeming satisfaction in some things, by reason of the hidden way of expression that is used in that Answer; for the matter is so conveyed in words, as the two late Assemblies and their Acts, which comprehends all the things in question betwixt us, are included in your specious Concession, and so in effect what seems to be granted there, is wholly over-turned: That these two late Assemblies and their Acts, are included in these Concessions, is not denied. Now, what suppose our approbation were not required thereto, to which we shall speak afterwards, was that reasonable satisfaction to our Propositions, which do relate mainly to the Work of God throughout this whole Church? We thought it needlesse to give instances of the things which were laid down by your Assembly, as uncontroverted among us, that are not yet practised so far as we can hear or learn by any of your number, these being so obvious and common. We cannot hear or learn since that Assembly at *Edinburgh*, that any ignorant, or scandalous, or corrupt Ministers have been removed from their Charge by you, neither yet have heard or learned any endeavours amongst you, that have been much effectually for purging out such Elders, or barring such from the Sacrament, with any greater measure of tenderness and care then formerly; yea, we do very well know, that many ignorant and scandalous, and corrupt Officers in the Lord's house, do shelter themselves under the wings of these Resolutions, which men, as before your taking of that way, they were backward and coldrise in all things relating to Reformation; so are they now upon



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the Van of your two late Assemblies, and their Acts; and as before they were fearfull and faint-hearted, feigning compliance with the wayes of these who were zealous for the Lord, and studying to flatter themselves into friendship with them, so are they now fierce and bitter, and would tread their Brethren into the dust, that they might arise no more. And we do also know, that in sundry of your Congregations, too little diligence and tendernes hath been used in debarring scandalous persons from the Communion, and to our grief do hear, that as many are carelesse in their practice this way, so that some do not obscurely insinuate, that scandalous persons who are willing to come, may be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Ye take a deal of pains to hold forth your peaceable disposition and carriage to us-ward, and our endeavoring upon the other side to make Peace & Union desperat. But let us see how you make out both: 1. As for your selves, the sum of your plea here and elswhere seems to consist in these two things; "1. That ye do not strictly adhere to what hath been done in your Assemb. in order to these differences, but are willing for Peace's sake to passe from many things, and to come to some kind of equall condescension, that the matter may be brought to a temper on both hands." 2. That you require nothing from us that imports an alteration of our judgment, either in the matter of the Publick Resolutions, or yet concerning the Authority of these Assemblies. But first to say nothing that we do not well understand this way of giving and taking, and tryling and tampering, and cutting and carving in the things of GOD, which ye your selves profess to be so necessary duties, and so beautifull, necessary and useful truths; The condescension and overture of Peace which ye offer, is far from being equall; for why? you do upon our part require, that "we should passe from our Protestations judicially under our hands, in our severall Synods and Presbyteries, and that we also give assurance in manner forelaid; that we shall forbear holding up divisions by debates about matters of our late differences since the Assembly 1650, in preaching, writing, or any otherwise, but upon your own part ye make no offer at all, either judicially or extrajudicially to pass from these Assemb. or to plead for or presse or vent these your Resolutions no further in preaching, writing, or any otherwise. And what unequall measures are these? The Protestation shall be judicially passed.

passed from, and the Assembly shall judicially stand; these shall be  
 not preaching, nor writing, nor venting of these things upon our  
 side, and as much upon yours as you will. *We speak it in sin-*  
 cerity and truth, that we have not attained to understand how  
 these things that you require of us, can be defended or yielded  
 unto by us, without alteration of our judgment, and wronging of  
 our consciences, because so far as we have attained to consider, pas-  
 sing from the Protection must relate thereto; either in regard of  
 what is past, or in regard of what is to come, or both. If we passe  
 from it in regard of what is past, then it imports one or all of these,  
 that we passe from it in regard of the matter or grounds, as not rel-  
 evant; or in regard of the manner, as not rightly gone about; or  
 in regard of the time, as not seasonable. But if we should do any  
 thing that should import it to have been either irrelevant or dis-  
 orderly, or unseasonable, we should either alter our judgment, or  
 dissemble and pervert, and so wrong our consciences, because in  
 our judgment it was relevant, orderly and seasonable. If our pass-  
 ing from it relate only to what is to come, then the meaning must  
 be, that we shall no further prosecute nor make use of it for infring-  
 ing or invalidating the Authority of these Assemblies, or any o-  
 ther Assembly of the like constitution; and by this means not only  
 shall we be bound never hereafter to speak ~~against~~ the constitution  
 and authority of these Assemblies, but to suffer them to passe for  
 free, lawfull, Generall Assemblies of this Kirk; but also though  
 these Assemblies, and many such, should be never so much pro-  
 secuted and carried on; yea, though there should be an Act made, or  
 an Engagement carried on by oath, that such and such ought  
 to be the constitution of all Generall Assemblies for the time to come,  
 we behoved to be silent, and not to open our mouth to declare  
 any dislike thereof; or dissent therefrom; and how we could do  
 this without an alteration of our judgment, or without signing a-  
 gainst our light, is beyond our reach; for our judgment was and  
 is, that we were bound to protest against that Assembly, and all As-  
 semblies of the Kirk so constituted, and to the utmost of our power  
 to keep the Kirk free of such corruptions at least, by our bearing  
 testimony against them, if we can do no more. *We may illustrate*  
 this business by a recent and memorable example in the year 1638.  
 The Marquess of Hamilton then Commissioner, did propound

such a desire to these who had then subscribed the National Covenant, that for Peace sake they would but passe from that their subscription which should be so far from condemning of the Covenant, or importing any alteration of their judgment, that the Covenant should be injoynd publicly by Authority to be subscribed by all the Subjects of the Kingdom, which was a far greater length of condescension upon the Kings part, and required lesse upon the Covenanters part then what is now offered unto us, and required of us in regard of the Protestation, yet they positively refused, being *abjuratio abjuratiōis*, though not *rei jurata*, a denying of their testimony, though not of the thing testified; a condemning, though not of the matter, yet of the manner; and so an implite and tacite engaging of themselves, never to do the like for the time to come, though the like opportunity and exigency should occurre. If the passing from the Protestation do relate both to what is past, and what is to come, then the same things do make it more clear, that we cannot passe from it, without altering of our judgement; for if the single doing of it in regard of one of these import this, then much more when the doing of it includes both, and that it doth indeed include both, seemeth to us to be obvious, because it is simply desired in your Overture, *that we should passe from it without mentioning any qualification or reserve*; and men are not allowed to distinguish, where the Law distinguisheth not. The same reason sticks with us, in regard of taking engagements not to preach or write, or any other wise to testify against the Publick Resolutions. For if we hold our judgments, that these Resolutions are unlawfull, and have involved the Land in a defectiōn, which hath brought on judgment and wrath from the Lord, and doth daylie bring an encrease of sin and of wrath; how can we with faithfulness, or without sin, engage our selves for ever hereafter to be silent concerning this thing, and not endeavor either by preaching, or writing, or otherwise, to convince others thereof? What is this upon supposall of our judgment, but to engage our selves not to discover the Lands iniquity, to turn away its captivity. But yet insinuat first, that *there is not another way to quench the fire of strife, unlesse these unnecessary and unbrotherly contests should be laid aside*. 1. Another and safer way of laying them aside there is, which we have often propounded unto you, or if that like you not, why

why do not you (who as it seems by your way of pleading with us, thinks that you may keep your judgement, and engage your selves not to vent it, and passe from any thing you have done for asserting of it.) condescend judicially under your hands to passe from these Assemblies, and not to hold up debates by preaching, writing, or any otherwise pleading for the Publick Resolutions, if ye think that we may do the one without altering our judgement, why shall you not think that we may do the other? And thus far yeeld to your Brethren, when they see that they cannot with a good conscience yeeld unto you. But ye tell us, that we must either yeeld *this*, or else affirm, *that the Publick venting of any thing which we conceive to be truth, may not be forborn, no not for the Churches peace, or that none can esteem an Assembly null, except they appear in a publick Protestation against it.* Before you perswade us, that we may safely, and without alteration of our judgement, embrace your Overture, it is not these Propositions which you have let down, that ye must convince us by, but these. There is no truth whatsoever the venting whereof may not be forborn for the Churches peace, and there is no case in which a man is bound to protest against an Assembly, though it be null and unlawfull, and we believe whatsoever we affirm of your Propositions you will not affirm these. There may haply be some truths which a man may forbear to vent for the Churches peace, and some Assembly which he may conceive null, and not appear in a Protestation against them; and upon the other side, there may be some truths which he cannot forbear to vent for the Churches peace, and some Assemblies which he cannot conceive to be null, and not protest against these. Therefore before the question be determined, it must be stated on these truths, & these Assemblies concerning which we have told you our judgement already, to wit, That we could not forbear to vent the one, or to protest against the other, and some of the reasons are these: 1. Because these were not truths newly discovered by Us, and not yet known nor received by others, but truths which both ye and we, and the whole Kirk of Scotland had received unanimously, and for a long time professed and pleaded for. 2. Because these were not truths that were of little or no concernment to the Work of Reformation, but such as have a great influence thereupon, and without venting and preserving of which, the Work could

could not as to meanes, be long preserved in purity. 3. Because these were not truths which were received in an overly way, but truths to which, we with you, and the whole Land, had solemnly engaged our selves to maintain and promote. And as to these Assemblies, we conceived a Protestation necessary for these and other reasons: 1. For preserving upon record in the Church, the right rule of constituting Generall Assemblies, and her judgment against a corrupt constitution thereof. 2. That we, and others who adhere to the right constitution thereof, might not be involved by our silence in a necessity to submit to the unjust Acts thereof. We would know how these who are convinced in their conscience that an Assembly is null, and that Assemblies will have them to do some unlawfull thing, shall upon your ground behave themselves? Shall they be silent and submit? and so by their silence and submission acknowledge the authority, the nullity whereof they are convinced of. The non-conformists of old in *Scotland*, were not of this mind; neither is yet all the question, whether we might without alteration of our judgments, safely enough have forbore to hold up debates? or whether we might have thought the Assembly null, and not have protested? But whether we may safely, and without alteration of our judgments, judicially passe from the one, and engage our selves not to do the other, to passe from the Protestation being made, doth not only say, that we might have spared the making of it, but (so far as we can see) that it should not have been made, and inferres our acknowledging the authority of these Assemblies, and to engage our selves not to preach, or any wayes to testify against the Publick Resolutions, is not onely sometimes to forbear it, but at all times and for ever to forbear it, though these Resolutions should be never so much pressed and promoted by you or any others. These things makes us conceive, that your disposition and carriage to us-ward is not so full of condescension, as you give it out, but such as at the best would involve us in a deal of sin and snares. Neither can we yeeld unto you, that there is any thing in our Papers that *makes Peace and Union desperate*, unless you mean of such an Union and Peace, as is not good nor approven of the Lord. We have propounded nor required nothing in order to Union and Peace, but what is agreeable to truth and righteousness; so far as our light reaches; And let us hear the reasons where-

by



by you endeavour to prove what you alledge; the first that we assert; That these who have been active for the Publick Resolutions, are men scandalous, and so not to be admitted to voice in Generall Assemblies; and that it is unlawfull to joyn in an Assembly made up for the most part of these who acted in, and approved of the late Assembly at *Dundee*. But if the first part of your reason be good, then may that be found, not only in your printed Papers, but in your Publick actings, that tends to the making *Peace and Union* desperate. Have ye not printed, and judicially enacted, that *these who continue to oppose these Resolutions, and will not acquiesce to the Acts relating to the same, are men scandalous*? And have ye not appointed them to be censured, and actually censured some of them, by removing them from sitting in Synods and Presbyteries? And have ye not declared all of them to be scandalous, and worthy to be censured, who do decline these Assemblies? And have ye not pronounced sentences of deposition and suspension against sundry of our number for so doing? But you'll haply say, That howsoever these things have been done as to what is past, yet for the time to come ye are willing to surcease the execution of these things, and to sit with us in Assemblies upon the terms of your Overture. You have no reason to challenge unto your selves any preference in the point of condescension, untill you shew your selves willing judicially under your hands to passe from these two Assemblies; and in the like manner not to hold up differences and debates concerning the late Resolutions of yours, which to our understanding would import an alteration of your judgement, for these are the lowest conditions you have as yet propounded unto us in order to Union for the time to come. As to the other part, that it is unlawfull to joyn in an Assembly made up for the most part of these who acted in, and approved of the late Assembly at *Dundee*. That which we hold out in that reason is, That no man ought to concur in keeping an Assembly, wherein the Constituent Members are for the most part such as are either Authors or approvers of the enacting of the persecution of many godly men, and that such was the Assembly at *Edinburgh* to be in the judgment of these who disapprove the Acts of the Assembly at *Dundee*. We pray you tell us ingenuously, and without shifting, whether ye think it lawfull to joyn in an Assembly made up for the most

The most part of these who do decline your two late Assemblies at  
 Dundee and Edinburgh: If you do not, your own way is still as  
 far from Union and Peace, as you would have others not believe  
 ours to be. If you do think it lawfull, and that you may do it  
 without sin, why then do you not make such an Overture to us?  
 or why do you make Acts excluding us? But to our thought of  
 the business, make each other wise blameless, and rightly quali-  
 fied; and as to the matter of acting in, and approving of the Assem-  
 bly at Dundee. We have already told you our judgment; neither  
 do we know anything in our first reason, against choosing Com-  
 missioners to the late Assembly at Edinburgh, that is contrary to  
 this. Now, these things being considered, we are content that  
 indifferent men judge, whether we require more of you then ye re-  
 quire of us. O whether our confession hitherto be not as great  
 as yours, though we think it but a poor plea, and little to be boasted  
 of, either by you or us, who is most condescending in the matters  
 of GOD, and own that it is indeed praise-worthy, and ar-  
 guments selfe denyall, compared much more others, and to require little  
 of them; but in GOD's matters, (if they be his matters indeed)  
 it is either scarce or facill, or worthy to make the mercat too cheap,  
 viz. by giving down any thing of his price, or weighing with another  
 not balance, then he hath appointed to weigh with.  
 Your shalbe hardly probable, that the Generall Assembly did  
 encourage Synods and Presbyteries to go on with censures against  
 Ministers and Elders; considering that not one Minister hath hi-  
 ther to been so much as proccesed for any thing relating to differen-  
 ces. But what if many Elders have upon the account of differences  
 been removed from sitting in Synods and Presbyteries? And if you  
 search better, you will haply find some Ministers to, that since that  
 time have been proccesed & sentenced upon the account of the diffe-  
 rences: And what though neither Minister nor Elder hath been pro-  
 cessd hitherto upon that account, yet both nor the most part of the  
 Assembly their making of Acts for censuring of them, encourage them  
 to go on with censures against their Brethren? Doth not he who  
 authorizes a man to take away his neighbours life, and furnisheth  
 him a sword for doing of it, encourage him to do so? We pray you  
 tell us, for what purpose you made those Acts? You did not mean  
 that Presbyteries and Synods should not put them to execution?

Or

Or were not your Acts, evidences of your reall intention and purpose. You desire to *show you*, that if the *beni-fail of your zeal was so much towards censures*, what hath intervened to blunt the edge of your zeal so much since? But not to repeat, that their zeal hath been exercised against many Elders, and some Ministers and Expectants: We doubt much that the edge of it be any thing blunted, though haply prudentiall considerations makes them forbear the putting of it forth as they would, till they find an opportunity more advantageous for their ends.

In the next place you speak to what we said of your *Letter to Noblemen and Gentlemen*, to which we shall now make little reply, because it hath been considered in some Observations upon the printed Acts of that Assembly, onely we say, 1. That if that Letter bewray not unpeaceable spirits, because they are known to be very peaceable men, in whose breasts the motion first bred, then may the Protestation at *St. Andrews* be allowed the same favourable construction, because it had its first rise from men to whom your selves will not deny the testimony of peaceable spirits. 2. We find no such expression in our Letter unto you, that the native scope of that Letter from your Assembly was, to stir up the malignant Party to exercise all their power against us, though yet we may safely say, that the work in the own nature of it tended thereto, because your Letter doth represent us to be such, as we love not to repeat; the impressions whereof being once thereby rooted in their minds, what could it probably (upon our refusall to hearken to their desire) bring forth but an encrease of their rancor, and an exercising of their power against us so far as they could. 3. You inquire *if the Letter was directed to any but Noblemen and Gentlemen, and pious persons within the Land*, and then tells us, *you cannot conceive those to be the Malignant Party whom we so much speak of*. There is no pious person in the Land whom we reckon to be of the Malignant Party, and we know that there be many Noblemen and Gentlemen who deserve a honorable testimony for their piety and integrity; yet we also know, that amongst the Noblemen, and Gentlemen, and Burgeses, and Ministers, and Commons, there is a Malignant Party; and therefore when you write to Noblemen and Gentlemen promiscuously, or without making a difference, we have just ground for such a grievance. To vindicate your Letter

you fall upon us, and tell us, that if you were going about, as the manner of some is, to charge us as being guilty of the Kingdoms ruine, &c. We might challenge you indeed, not onely for stirring up the Malignant Party to exercise their power against us, but also for making our own people abhorre us. Well, out of your own mouth shall you be judged; doth not your Vindication speak of us a little from the beginning, "Tell the World, that it is very apparent, that selfish interest moved the prime contrivers and sticklers in our busines, who having adventured upon such high courses and attempts, tending to the violation of the Nationall Faith, renting and ruining the Kingdom, trampling upon Authority, and carrying with them Tenets contrary to the mind of all Orthodox Kirks, and to the Faith, and not being able to abide tryall in these things, found it safest for them rather altogether to disclaim the Authority of the Assembly, then to hazard upon a fair and orderly tryall of their matters, &c. And if you say, that these things do not concern all, but some of us, we desire you to read over again what you have said of all of us in your Warning at Perth, wherein ye characterize us as Malignants: In your Declaration at Dundee, wherein you hold forth the steps of that renting and separation you conceive us to be upon; "Some steps whereof (you say) you can find no paralell practice unto, except that of the perfidious Prelats at the Generall Assembly at Glasgow, who minded the overthrow of all Assemblies whatsoever, and alledge that at one stroak we have done what in us lyes to throw down the hedge of Discipline of this Kirk, and make way for every beast of the Forrest, Schismatick, and Sectmaster, to enter without controlment in this time of their being among us prevalent by the sword, and to tread down the precious Truths and Ordinances of Jesus Christ, And that we have done this upon so frivolous and falsely alleadged grounds, as may make the Authority of all the Assemblies of this Kirk (since the begun Reformation) to be called in question upon the same or like pretence, whereby all the glorious Work of Reformation, carryed on by these holy Assemblies, according to the grounds whereupon we have walked and protested, should (as you say) at one blast be over-turned from the foundation. You may also remember your Warning at Forfar, wherein ye pronounce the heavy curse of God upon us; And

And your Informations to *England*, which we have cited already, and your Declaration from your last Assembly at *Edinburgh*; who knowes not that you write, and print, and preach, and discourse us "to be renters of the Church, ruiners of the Kingdom, procurers of "the wrath of God, compliers with the enemies of the Cause and "Kingdom, such as have made defection from honesty to treachery, and many things of that kind, which are not pleasant to be repeated; and therefore from your own mouthes we may well conclude, that you have not onely stirred up the Malignant Party to exercise their power against us, but also that you have done what in you lyes to make our own people to abhor us.

We shall not insist much in going through your Answers to that part of our Letter, which concerns our dissatisfaction with your Commission, in slighting and mis-construing all our endeavors for peace, and in mis-representing our proceedings unto Presbyteries. Your selves know, that we were so far slighted, that they would not daigne before their rising, to acquaint us either with the time, or place of their conference, let be to do it with mutuall consent and advice; but that they did authoritatively without acquainting us, appoint both, and then sent us word to keep the Diet which they had indicted. Hath the like of that been heard of, that when two parties being at distance, neither of which do acknowledge the authority of the other, and the one of them desires a friendly conference with the other, for removing of differences, and begetting a right understanding betwixt them, that the other will insinuat nothing of their mind to these who desire the Conference concerning the time and place, much lesse transacted by mutual consent, but authoritatively resolve, and then send them word, *either come to us on such a day, and to such a place, or else we will confer none with you at all.* What is this but in effect to say, Either submit to us, and acknowledge our Authority, else we will confer none with you; Was not this to slight us? Yet this your Commission did, and then mis-represented our proceedings to Presbyteries, by signifying unto them, that the Conference appointed by the Commission was slighted by us. Was it not obvious unto them, that we would stumble if they should take that way, had we not signified it unto them, desiring that it might be prevented. And can any shew any reall prejudice that would have redounded to  
F 2 their



their Affairs, by condescending upon a day and place by mutuall consent and advice? You do but please your selves, but will satisfie no other who knowes the businesse, when you tell us, *that it will not be thought strange unto any who knowes, that we advised with none of your judgments, when we drew up our Demand, &c.* That these of our number were not advised with, in drawing up of the Commissions Answer, because to say nothing that we did communicate our Demand to these who were meeting with us, in order to Union and Peace, before it was given in to your Commission, and that most of them went a great length in approving what was contained therein, and promised to endeavour a satisfactory Answer to our Demand, did not contain any thing at all of the time and place of the meeting, but left that to be condescended upon by mutuall consent, and give us leave to say, that you also mis-represent things, when you alleadge, *that we desire that your Commission should non-commissionat themselves.* Our desire only was, that they would declare, that they would forbear all acting as Commissioners of the Generall Assembly, so long as endeavours and conferences for Union did continue, as upon their condescendence we did offer to declare the like concerning the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly 1650. you insinuat, *that it could not be condescended unto, because the necessity of the Church might have required their acting.* If so, the time appointed for endeavours of Union might have been the shorter, or with this proviso, that when a necessity should appear, the Conference should break off; but necessity both in this and other cases which concerns our differences, hath been more pretended unto, then proven.

In order to what we did write unto you concerning your Fasts, you do first propound this question, *If ever we read in any Church story, in any age of the Church, that when difference of judgment did fall out among eminent and prime Church-members, that ever the one Party being the fewer, and no Church-judicatory did take upon them to turn over the one side of the Controversie unto Causes of Gods Wrath upon the Church, and by the sole authority of Church-Sessions, hold them forth to Congregations to be mourned for at solemn Fasts, and this all before the rent did turn remediable, and while the same Party is pretending unto peace, and charging the other with slighting all Overtures for union and healing.*

*healing.* Here is an operous question intended ( as appears ) to put us to silence, and involve us in a great deal of absurdity, in regard of the Publick Fasts lately kept by us; and though we need not decline to answer it as it is propounded ; yet some things we shall premise. 1. Why is it that ye think this a fault in us ? It cannot be, because prime and eminent Church-Members differ upon the question, otherwise no side of any question that hath been agitated in the Church at any time, readily could have been turned over unto a cause of God's wrath ; because we have turned over the one side of the difference into causes of controversie ; neither can it be whilst the rent was not remediless ; and men were pretending to union and peace, otherwise why had ye done the same ? Do not ye hold forth the opposing of the Publick Resolutions, and separating there-from, and from your Assembly, to be our sin, and that for which the Land ought to mourn and be humbled for ? Have ye not so published in your Warnings and Causes of Humiliations ? and have you not all along been pretending unto peace, and charging us with slighting of your Overtures for union and healing. There is nothing of this kind you can fasten upon us, but it may with als good reason be fastened upon your selves, unleste it be, that we are the fewer number, and we believe ye will not lay the weight of it there ; doth not the Lord command us ( though the fewer number ) to *plead with our Mosher* ? and if we be Ministers of the Gospel, hath he not commanded us to *cry aloud and spare not, to lift up our voyce like a trumpet, to shew his people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin* ? Doth he not challenge these Prophets, who *do not discover the iniquity of his people, to turn away their captivity* ? If the greater part will not do it, or *call evill good, or good evill*, shall therefore the lesser part be blame-worthy for cleaving to their duty, because they are the lesser part ? We think that upon second thoughts, you will not justifie what you seem to aim at in this Quere, *b. c.* to conclude us in an incapacity to hold forth the Causes of the Lord's wrath, because we are the fewer part, and that upon this account we are under guilt for so doing. 2. There is little or nothing contained in the Causes, that was not ( upon the matter ) formerly determined by this Church ; if we had vented new doctrine, or if the one side of the controversie had not been truths formerly received

ceived by this Church, this practice might have seemed somewhat strange: But when we do but keep the ground where the Church of *Scotland* formerly stood, and hold out the guilt of departing there-from, are we therefore to be blamed, though we were no Church Judicatory? 3. It is a mistake when it is said, that *these causes are holden forth into Congregations by the sole authority of Kirk-Sessions*. They were condescended upon by the Commission of the Generall Assembly 1650. with the advice of many Ministers and Elders from severall parts of the Countrey, as the title of them bears. 4. Though we be a Party, who not onely pretend to peace, but also do really desire it, yet did never any of our pretences involve, that we were not to look upon these things as causes of God's wrath; but all our pretensions to peace have been still attended with desires and endeavors, that the Lands defection and sin in these things, might be taken with, and acknowledged; But upon the question, we wonder if ye be in earnest when you ask this question of us; do ye indeed think (even as your selves state it) in no case such a thing were lawfull or expedient to be done. What if there should fall out in the Church of *Scotland* a difference amongst prime and eminent Church-members concerning Prelacy and the train of the Ceremonies which we have abjured, or concerning the lawfulness of the Covenants which we have sworn, or concerning the Masse and the body of Popery, might not the one Party being the fewer, and no Church-Judicatory, take upon them to turn over the wrong side of the controversie to a cause of God's wrath upon the greater part receiving the same, and by the sole authority of Church Sessions, hold it forth to Congregations to be mourned for at solemn Fasts, and this all before the rent were altogether remediable or desperat, & while that smaller party were seeking peace and union upon right & warrantable grounds, what would you have allowed unto, and what did the fewer part of the Church in the time of the spreading of the *Arrian* Heresie, and down-wards in many generations and Churches, in the time of Popish darknesse and superstition? What would you have allowed? And what did the fewer part of the Church of *England* in the beginning of Queen *Mary* her raigne? Have we not many instances both in Sacred and Ecclesiastick story, of the fewer part of the Church bearing Testimony against the corrupti-

ons and defections of the greater part, and holding forth their corruptions and defections as provoking causes of the Lord's wrath, and yet endeavouring union and peace with them in such a way as was warrantable and allowed of GOD. To come nearer home, you cannot have forgotten, that upon the difference of judgment falling out among prime and eminent Church-members of this Church, concerning Prelacy and the Ceremonies, that the one party being the fewer, and no Church-Judicatory, did turn over the one side of the controversie into Causes of God's wrath upon the greater part, and did hold them forth to Congregations to be mourned for, whilst they did not look upon the rent as remediable, and did not endeavor union and peace with the greater part, by bringing them back to the truth, from which they had declined, which though for the time it was no lesse cryed out upon by the Prelats and their Adherents, then our practice is now cryed out upon by you, yet did the Lord blesse it for preserving much of the purity, and somewhat of the power of his Ordinances in the Land, and at last unto the bringing of this whole Church to remember whence they had fallen, and to repent, and do their first works. Was not then the difference of judgment among prime and eminent Kirk-members, your selves know, that diverse of the most eminent both for learning, and prudence, and piety were on both sides, and did not the one party, being the fewer, and no Church-Judicatory, turn over the one side of the controversie into Causes of Gods wrath, and propone them to be mourned for, both in privat and in publick; their Books and Sermons which are yet extant, and many living witnesses in Scotland; yea, sundry of your selves who were Actors in these things as much as we, are now in this, can bear record of it; all which being so well known unto you, we wonder why you should ask us such a question, if ever we read of such a thing in the Church?

To our stumbling at the Causes of your Fasts, because generall and ambiguous, your Answer is, that if we had instanced any of these, you should have answered, and that sure you are, it is an unjust charge. But if it be an unjust charge, you have some of these whom ye conceive to be of your own judgment, to challenge for it as well as us, otherwise give us a reason why they would not read the Causes of some of these Fasts, even of your last Fast, the Causes whereof

whereof (as seems) ye think least liable to this charge; and if it be an unjust charge, we desire you to tell us, why some of you who had hand in contriving of these Causes, said to some who were scrupling to joyn in an Humiliation upon them, that *they were not meant of us*; And others of you who also had hand in contriving of them, said in the Pulpit, That *they were meant of us, but that you spared to name us, lest you should make your brethren odious*; But besides these, we give you three other grounds of the justice of this charge. 1. The many questionings and doubts of many professors upon the causes concerning the meaning of sundry of them, which they say, they cannot positively understand, because they may be expounded this way, or that way, or both ways. 2. The different meaning that is given of them by sundry of your own number, both in their Sermons and Conferences; some expounding them of divisions in generall; some, of these who have invaded the Land; some, of these of this Church who have turned aside to Independency or Anabaptisme; some, of the Protesters; and some, of all the three. 3. and chiefly, sundry of the expressions themselves which are used in severall of these causes, do prove them to be generall and ambiguous. *Inst. 1.* In the third Cause of the Humiliation appointed by your Assembly at Dundee 1651. you have these expressions, *Our obstinate continuing in these evils, which we might palpably read in the rod wherewith the Lord hath been smiting us; such as unstraight dealings in our Covenant with God*; but you do not let us understand what sort of dealings you mean of, in reference to our Covenant with GOD, which was to leave people in the mist, there being then such a controversy over all the Land about this thing; many, both Ministers & people pleading, that the Treaty with the King, and the Publick Resolutions, did include unstraight dealings in our Covenant with GOD, and mo, both Ministers and People denying it, and pleading, that the opposing of these, did include unstraight dealing in our Covenants with GOD. *Inst. 2.* In the third Cause of the Fast appointed by your late Assembly at Edinburgh, you do again mention *Covenant breaking, especially in this day of our calamity and tryall, and the shamelesse despising of the Oath of GOD, so often and so solemnly sworn by us, men thinking to escape by iniquitie, and making lies their refuge*; but ye do not let the Land understand



stand what ye mean by this; whether the opposing of the Publick Resolutions, and declining your Assembly, or taking of the Tender, or falling off to Independencie, or Anabaptisme, or any thing else? *Inst.* 3. In the fourth and fifth Causes of the same Humiliation, you mention *Zions breaches*, which seems irreparable, *breaking her with breach upon breach*, *tearing her veil*, *breaking down her hedge*, *desiring her precious things*, and *blasting and exposing them to foxes and boars*, and whilst is thus with her, *her lovers forgetting her*, *her children still contending in the furnace*, and then, *the foul departure from the true doctrine received in this Kirk*, and *separation from the communion and government thereof*, that *some Ministers & other unstable souls are turned aside to contrary to their Solemn Vows and Covenants*. But what these breaches are, who hath made these breaches? and who hath done all these other things, ye do not mention at all in these Causes; and is not this to be generall and ambiguous, especially when there is so much contending what these things are, and who are the Authors of them, should not these whom ye desire so fast and humble themselves before the Lord, be particularly instructed about this guilt, and where it lyes, that poor souls may not be led into a snare, nor the Name of the Lord prophaned by justifying of the guilty, or condemning the Innocent? *Inst.* 4. In the Causes of your last Fast, towards the end of *March*, to which you give such a testimony of cleanness and particularnesse, we find these expressions; 1. In the third Cause, "The increase and brightening of all our wofull differences and divisions, to the great scandall of Christian Religion, and apparent ruine of the Work of Reformation established amongst us. And in the fourth Cause, "The many sad encroachments from diverse hands, made and like to be made upon the precious liberties of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ: but you do not confesse who are the Authors of these divisions, nor of these encroachments, or what they are, or where the guilt of them lyes; but as to these, leaves people to grope in the dark.

Ye are pleased to oppose your selves to that which we say, That we find in Gods ordinary way of dealing with his people, that there hath been usually some publick sins, and breaches of Covenant preceding such sad judgments, which brought their sins to remembrance. We thought that you would have suffered this to passe without contradiction; as that which hath been commonly

taught both by you and us, and other sound Divines, and is to our observation agreeable to the Scriptures: We know that God exercises particular persons one or more, with many sad afflictions, even when they hold fast their integrity, and he may do so also with whole Nations, and haply doth he so sometimes with them, but that he punishes whole Nations & Incorporations of people with common judgments, especially such as we have been visited with, without some speciall sins and provocations, we think very few (if any) instances can be given in his Word; we have not observed rightly if such common calamities and judgments, either threatned or poured upon whole Nations and their Rulers, be not for some great provocation preceding. Ye say, *ye are deceived if ye have not found the contrary*. Though you had found one or two instances of the Lords dealing other wise, yet that is not the contrary of what we assert; for we did not say, that it is alwayes so, but that in his ordinary way of dealing it hath been usually so, and this most of the judgments that are recorded in Scripture against the Nation of the Jewes who were his people, will prove: Two instances you bring to the contrary, one from the 44 *Psalme* another from the *Persecutions of the Primitive Christians*; But we conceive, that neither of the two will in the least infringe what we said. Will ye assert that what is spoken in *Psalme 44* is meant of the body of the Lord's people, whether it be taken of the Israelites, or of those of Judah before the captivity of *Babylon*, or of the Jewes in the dayes of *Antiochus*, can ye give any probable ground from their story, that ever such calamities came upon them as is there spoken of, but when there was some grievous sin amongst them: Therefore we conceive these things that are spoken of holding fast their integrity, and being stedfast in the Lord's Covenant, notwithstanding of all that was come upon them, to be meant of particular persons amongst them who had done so, when the body of the Nation had revolted from God; and whether there be not also some thing of this kinde in order to the persecution of the Primitive Christians, that the generality of these who profess the Gospel, did grievously sin before these terrible strokes came on, we leave it unto you to consider. Besides, that it may be added, that there was no Nation nor Civill Incorporation of people Christian at that time, but that the Magistrat every where was heathen, and therefore is not applicable to what we did intend, to wit, to speak of God's proceeding to judgment

ment with a people professing his Name, whose Governours are of themselves, or with a Nationall Church. But it seems ye do not lean much to this defence, therefore you subjoyn, "That granting that "some breaches of Covenant had gone before our sad stroak, must it "therefore follow (say ye) that these were the Publick Resolutions? If you grant this, why do ye not tel us, or why do ye not tel the whole Land what they were? Ye seem to insinuat, that *they were in relation to these who are our rod*. If you do so indeed think, it would be expected of faithfull men, that in a day of so great controversie from the Lord, ye would discover this iniquity that hath brought the rod upon us; Or if ye indeed mean to grant, That it was any eminent breach of Covenant preceding our calamity, how can you acquit your selves untill you declare it, and cry it aloud? But next, though we were perswaded that the breach is in these, ye ask us, "If we do indeed think it "a sin before the Lord for you who are not so perswaded to mourn "for other land-destroying sins, which are upon all hands uncontroverted, and (lest we should haply deny) you confirm it with the practice of *Josbua* and the *Israelites* mourning after the defeat at *Asi*, "though they knew not *Achans* sin; And of *Job* mourning for what "he knew, though there was something he did not yet know, as appears from his prayer 10.21. We are so far from blaming you for mourning for uncontroverted guiltines, that we wish and pray, that the Lord may give both unto you and unto us, to mourn more & more for it. That was none of the things we complained of, but that the Causes of your Fasts and humiliations, sundry of them are set down in general and ambiguous expressions, which lets not men know what is that uncontroverted guiltines for which you mourn, but leaves it upon debate whether it be this, or that, or the third thing; though yet we desire in sobriety of mind to tel you, that your case is neither like that of *Josbua* nor like that of *Job*, because as they did diligently search, so did they readily receive the discoveries of the iniquity that was hidde from them. "Ye like not (as ye say) the distinction of godly and prophane, for "strengthening of faction and interest. Neither that, nor any other distinction is to be liked for so selfish and bad an end, but for strengthening of the truth (upon which accompt only we use it) ydu cannot justly dislike it: if you had so pleased, you might have brought us other presidents for following such a method then ye do, to wit, the Generall Assembly 1648, who in their Declaration against the unlawfull Engagement, made use of an Argument taken from this distinction;

tion; we desire your selves to bethink you what you would have answered to these Engagers then objecting to the Assembly what ye now object to us in that point. But from what you do subjoyn (it seems) that could ye win at it, you could also be content to vex your spirits with that which ye think a vanity in us; for you tell us, "That your information fails you, if the generality of noted Professours of any old standing, do not joyn with you in your Fasts and Humiliations. We pray you, what do you mean by the generality of noted Professours of any old standing? not such surely as are noted for excess and riot, for scandalous and loose walking, and for opposition to the Work of God, and their long continuance therein, that the generality of these do joyn with you, neither your selves nor we, deny; it must then be these who are noted for denying ungodlinesse and worldly lusts; and *living godly, righteously and soberly in a present evill world*; and if it be warrantable for you thus to distinguish, why do you taxe it in us? But to the point it self, though haply there were some truth in what you say, yet might the truth of what we assert also, abide sure. There were indeed before the beginning of the late Reformation, many gracious souls in *Scotland*, whereof many remain unto this day, but we think that you will not deny, that since the renewing the National Covenant, the Ordinances of God have been more eminently blessed of God then in the Prehats time, by which it hath come to passe, that the number of the godly hath multiplied above what it then was; and if any of these, or the generality of these, cannot away with, nor joyn in your Fasts, surely you would not think light of it. But we cannot yeeld that the generality of noted Professours of any old standing, do joyn with you in these, when ye have informed your selves more perfectly, we do much mistake if you do not find it far otherwise. It were no great difficulty to instance unto you, not onely whole Congregations and Presbyteries, but whole Burghs and Shires, in which (to use your own language) we have not observed, or do hear of noted Professors either of old or late standing who do approve of your way; That there is such a spirit (as you speak of) *stirring in these times*, we do easily grant, and that we and all who dislike your way, have reason upon that consideration, to walk with much trembling and fear in all these things, that we do not abuse our liberties for a pretext unto the flesh; what the Lord for our further correction and tryall may suffer to fall out among us, we do not know; but for the present we should deny the goodness of God, if we did not acknowledge his gracious hand up-

on the hearts of his people, making them cleave to his Ordinances, and to have an honorable estimation of them, which we think a mercy so much the greater, that so great cause of stumbling is given unto them by many things in your way, and particularly in your Fasts and Humiliations, both in regard of the causes and the carriage of many of your number in their Prayers and Sermons; who notwithstanding of your earnest pressing upon us not to hold up divisions concerning the late differences, by preaching, writing, or otherwise, yet are so full of invectives against us and our way, as that not a few who have come to hear them, have been driven away from them, and discouraged to come again; as meeting with little but that which was the grief and burden of their souls: We know that there be men amongst you of another temper; but would to God that every gracious and wise man amongst you, were but for a few dayes witnesses to the carriage of a great many in your number in their Pulpits and Presbyteries, in the matters of difference, haply it would make them to acknowledge, that Satan is stirring exceedingly to bring the Lord's Ordinances into contempt & to bring his people in distast therof, and to forbear to strengthen these mens hands any more; & to joyn their shoulders for taking some solid and warrantable course whereby the Lords people may get satisfaction in the matters of their stumbling, & be kept off these rocks against which some have already dasht. What we speak of all the profane of the Land, was not simply in order to their joyning with you, but to their joyning with you with such a furious carnall zeal, which doth so break out in their pleading for your humiliations, & careful attending such diets and opportunities with delight & approbation, whilst yet they do slight other occasions even with your selves for worshipping the Lord: the truth of this is manifest through the whole Land, & ye your selves do not deny it: what (we beseech you) can be the cause of this, but the finding of some thing in these Fasts and humiliations that pleaseth their corrupt disposition, or the acting of one and the same spirit that stirs in the Publick Resolutions; if any prophane have separated from you and joyned with us, it seems by your own concession, is more then we know; for ye say, that if we knew them, we would not think you uncharitable to say, that it was nothing of conscience that moved them. And truly you shall do us acceptable service, if you will let us know them; that we may witness our dislike of their way unto themselves and others. In the close of this point you tell us, "that you account it no reproach unto you, nor to the way of God which you main-



"maintain, though many prophane should joyn in your Fasts, and two  
 "things you hint at to bear off the reproach, one is, that they usually  
 "did so in years by-past at such Fasts, as were appointed by Publick  
 "Judicatories: Another is, that the same hath been objected as a mat-  
 "ter of reproach against the Presbyterian way by others, and that we  
 "our selves have often answered it. The objection was not simply, that  
 many prophane did joyn in your Fasts, but that as many of the godly  
 of the Land could not away with, nor joyn in your Fasts and humili-  
 ations, so all the wicked and grossly prophane, who have alwayes hated,  
 and do still hate the Ordinances of God in their power and purity, do  
 with such a furious carnall zeal, defend and maintain your humiliati-  
 ons, and carefully attend such diets and opportunities with delight and  
 approbation, and yet do slight other occasions even with your selves,  
 for worshipping the Lord; which things are not applicable to former  
 humiliations, because from these none of the godly did withdraw, but  
 did attend them with fervencie and zeal; and next, because many of the  
 prophane and malignant did withdraw from publick Fasts and humi-  
 liations, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly & shiftingly as your selves  
 know; and such of them as did joyn in these Fasts, did it with no fer-  
 vencie and zeal, but rather by constraint and unwillingly, for avoiding  
 the censures of the Kirk: But now it is quite contrary, many of the god-  
 ly withdraw, or if they joyn, it is with much burden and weight of  
 spirit; and all the wicked and prophane, joyn with a great deal of fer-  
 vencie, yea quarrel with all who will not joyn with them; a thing we  
 do again desire you to consider of, for such an objection we have not  
 hitherto heard, much lesse answered, against the Presbyterian way. To  
 your stumbling at the alledged spreading of doubles of our Letter, be-  
 fore it came to your hands, we answered already. And to your quitting  
 of your judgment anent the Publick resolutions, as necessarily previous  
 to an union, we have also spoken in part, and shall speak more anon.

Having answered our Letter, ye shew us, that *ye will not take upon  
 you to speak your sense of that way wherein we have walked this time  
 past, because (say you) the Gen. Assembly having spoken so much to  
 that purpose, whom if we do not hear, ye conceive neither will we hear  
 you.* We are not conscious to our selves of despising the voyce of any  
 free lawful Gen. Assembly, and till ye prove yours to be such, you have  
 no reason to charge us with this, though your Assemblies are not law-  
 full nor free, we have heard and considered what they have said, and  
 are still willing to hear, either you or them, & to hearken also unto and  
 receive

receive any point of truth that shalbe holden forth unto us. In the last place you do propound unto us some *Quærees*, to which ye earnestly crave and expect an Answer, because you conceive a clear and distinct Answer to the things which you question, wil much satisfie the minds of many, concerning the sincerity of our endeavours for healing, and our willingness to remove these things, which in the apprehension of many, are reall impediments and stumbling-blocks, cast in the way of Union and Peace. We are indeed prone to think, that plain and through dealing in some things on both hands, may contribute for clearing one anothers mindes, and haply for begetting a better understanding, and making way for Peace and Union: therefore without anxious inquiring whether an apprehension, that either we would not, or could not, without great disadvantage answer these *Quærees*, had any sway in propounding the same; we shall endeavour to satisfie your desire, by giving clear and distinct answers, thereunto, and so much the rather, because we expect from you equall dealing in the *Quærees*, which for mutuall satisfaction we shall hereafter propound unto you.

*Ans. to the first Quæree.*

We do not conceive that we can have no union with you, untill ye profess an alteration of your judgment; we have still kept union in many things with you; but if you mean of an union, or joynt acting in a Gen. Assembly, we do not see how it will be solid or durable, or tend to edification and securing the Work of Reformation, untill ye profess an alteration of your judgment, or give security to build no further upon the foundation and principles of the Publick Resolutions by prosecuting of the same, or making use thereof for the time to come, and is no more then ye require of us in order to Union and Peace.

*Ans. to the second Quæree.*

In so far as ye have been Authors and Abettors of the Publick Resolutions, which are contrary to the Law and to the Testimony, and to the Covenant and Solemn Engagements of this Church, and have proven very prejudiciall to the Work of God, and brought forth the persecution of sundry of his Ministers and People, and have laid a foundation for persecuting of many of them, because of their cleaving to their duty; in so far as ye have been Authors and Abettors of these things, and do adhere thereunto, and endeavor to prosecute the same, in so far we conceive you to be scandalous, and the more unfit to sit in Church-Judicatories, especially in the Gen. Assembly, which is the chief Judicatory, where all enormities ought to be helped, and grievances remedied,

died, and therefore had more special need to consist of persons that are blamelesse; and these are no worse thoughts of you, then ye have of us; you not only look upon us as scandalous and unfit to sit in the Judicatories of the Church, especially in Gen. Assemblie upon the account of our differences, but upon the same account have made Acts for censuring us, and casting us out of the Judicatories, and have actually sentenced and removed sundry of us, both Ministers, & ruling Elders already.

*Ans. to the third Quære.*

Asong as these who acted in, and approved of the late Assembly at Dundee, do profess their purpose to cleave to that Assemblie. & to hold fast and promote, and prosecute these actings; we do think it unlawful to joyn in an Assemblie made up for the most part of these (if by joyning in an Assemblie with them, you mean (as we think you do) your concurring or consenting to make them Members, or that they should sit & voice therein) because in that Assemblie which yet was no Assemblie they did not only make many corrupt Acts, very prejudiciall to the Work of God, but also enact persecution against many godly men, and execute it against some, for no other cause, but because of the doing of their duty, and if they should hold fast, and promote and prosecute these things, we do not see how we could be lawfully concurring or consenting to their sitting in an Assemblie. Your inference of *adjoining Synods and Presbyteries, and taking off our Ministers* also, hath been often answered, and have not you your selves put a difference betwixt the sitting of Ruling Elders in Presbyteries and Synods, and putting them out of Kirk Sessions, even upon one and the same cause, allowing these Elders of our judgment liberty to sit in Sessions, though yet ye do not think them worthy to sit in Presbyteries or Synods.

*Ans. to the fourth Quære.*

We know none of our judgment who refuse to joyn with you in the Publick acknowledgement of uncontroverted guiltinesse, onely because you cannot go over your light to acknowledge that for a sin which you esteeme to have been a duty, and therefore we need cite no Scriptures warranting a Separation for that only cause, all of our judgment do ordinarily and frequently joyn with you in the publick acknowledgement of uncontroverted guiltinesse, and when any of them refuse to joyn as in your publick Fasts; it is not for that onely reason which you alleadge, but for these reasons, and such as these. 1. Because, whilst you have no such authority for indicting these Fasts, yet ye do pretend to a common authority over this whole Church, by

vertue

virtue of which you do indict them. 2. Because you make sundry of the reasons of them general and ambiguous, of which we have spoken before. 3. Because these Reasons are to prosecute and explained, as justifying that which is evil, and condemning that which is good; and if you think that these and such causes as these should be of no weight to make us forbear to joyn in your Fasts, then why do not you also joyn in ours.

*Answer to the fifth Quære.*

If by these erroneous Ministers, whom you alleadge to have avowedly spitted upon their mothers face &c. you mean any of these who cleave unto us (as we have some reason to think that you do, because this is the usual description that many of your number do give of us in their Prayers, Sermons, and Conferences) then you need not to wonder that we do not cordially joyn and excite to the censuring of such, because we do not conceive them to be guilty of that crime of which you accuse them, and for which you think them worthy to be censured. If you mean of the Ministers who have separated themselves from this Church, when you have answered the question in regard of your selves, it is like that you will also find an answer in regard of us so far as we are therein concerned. To joyn with you in that particular by virtue of the Authority and Acts of your two late Assemblies, we cannot, because we do not acknowledge that Authority, and those Acts. If you mean of our joyning in Synods and Presbyteries, we know no slackness that hath been peculiar to us in this particular in these Judicatories, haply some of our number hath not thought it seasonable: and for edification to draw forth censures against such, until more pains should be taken upon them for reclaiming of them, and haply in this they had most of these, who are of your own way, of one judgment with them, otherwise why hath it not been done, if ye judge it both lawful and expedient without taking further pains upon them, how can you excuse your selves for neglecting of it, seeing you are the plurality in some Presbyteries and Synods, where some of these Ministers do reside, and do challenge to your selves, and in other things exercise the supream Ministerial Authority over this Church and all the Members thereof? And if you judge it not expedient, why do you blame any of our number for so judging? There is as much in our practise as may convince you that we are no patrons of Errors, nor of erroneous persons in their Errors, yea somewhat more

(if we may say it without boasting) then hath yet appeared in the practise of these who challenge us.

*Answer to the sixth Quære.*

Concerning your sixth Quære, we have spoken our judgment already in our Answer to your Reply to our Letter, and here need not to repeat it again, only to that which you say, that if it were done by others it would seem Prelatical like. We reply, That this, or the like equivalent of it, hath been done by famous men of this Church who were most anti-Prelatical, yea, by some of the most anti-Prelatical amongst your selves, who now challenge it in others; a point so recent in memory that it can easily be attested by many living witnesses.

*Answer to the seventh Quære.*

If the third part, or half the number of Church members come to age, be found ignorant or scandalous, it is no fault to debar them from the Lords Table; but a thing that ought to be done: And if you mean it of persons not ignorant or scandalous, we know none of our number that have debarred either the third part, or half the number of the Church-members come to age, as unworthy to communicate, though haply they may have delayed to admit them, either because they refused to come and submit themselves to trial, or because there was not time to take trial of them; which is no step to Separation, but very agreeable both to the principles and practise of this Church, which requires a Minister to take trial of the knowledge and carriage of his Paroshiners, that he may find them qualified thereunto, before he admit them, either by sufficient testimonials thereof from other Congregations whither they have come, or by enquiry and trial made by himself and his Elders.

*Answer to the eighth Quære.*

The positive signs of real Repentance which we require in these who are to be received after scandal unto the fellowship of this Church, are the same, and no other then are required by the uncontroversied General Assemblies of this Church, old and late, in their Doctrine and Acts concerning this purpose, to wit, by the General Assembly 1571, in the month of June, which doth ordain and appoint, That none be admitted to publick Repentance, except that first they may be admitted thereunto by the Session and Assembly of the Ministers and Elders, in which they ought sharply to be examined of what fear and terror they have of Gods judgments, what hatred



hatred of sin and sorrow for the same, and what sense and feeling they have of Gods mercies, in the which if they be ignorant, they ought diligently to be instructed : for it is but a mocking to present such to publick Repentance, as neither understand what sin is, what repentance is, what grace is, nor by whom Gods mercie and favour is purchased. Then after that the offender shall be instructed in the Assembly so, that he have some tast of Gods judgments, but chiefly of Gods mercies in Christ Jesus. He may be presented before the publick Church, &c. and by the Gen. Assembly 1596. in the month of *March*, renewed and revived by the Assembly 1638. which ordains, That none falling in publick scandals, be received in the fellowship of the Church, except his Minister have some appearance and warrant in conscience, that he hath both a feeling of sin, and apprehension of mercie; and for this effect that the Minister travel with him by Doctrine and private instruction to bring him hereto, and specially in the Doctrine of Repentance, which being neglected, the publick place of Repentance is turned into a mocking : And by the Gen. Assembly 1649. in the month of *July*, which doth appoint, That because many have heretofore made shew and profession of their Repentance who were not convinced of their guiltiness, nor humbled for the same, but did thereafter return with the dog to the vomit, and the sow to the puddle, unto the mocking of God and the exceeding great reproach of his Cause ; therefore for the better determining the truth and sincerity of the Repentance of these who desire to be admitted to the Covenant and Communion, it is appointed and ordained, That none of these persons who are debarred from the Covenant and Communion, shall be admitted and received thereto, but such as after exact trial shall be found for some competent time before or after the offer of their Repentance according to the direction of the respective Judicatories, to have in their ordinary conversation given testimony of their dislike of the late unlawful Engagement, and of the courses and wayes of Malignants, and of their sorrow for their accession to the same, and to live soberly, righteously and godly, If you do allow of these signs (as it would seem you do, by your Preface to the Answer to our Propositions at *Edinburgh* in *July* 1652.) as that which ought to be required in persons who are to be received after scandal in fellowship of the Church, and yet think that they may not be required in admitting of Church-members then your selves can give a reason

of your own judgment. As for us, we do in the matter of Church-members, and things that are to be required in admitting of them, adhere to the received Doctrine of this Church as well as in the former; and if any thing relating either to the one or to the other, we have departed therefrom, you would let us know it.

*Answer to the ninth Query.*

Before we give you a reason of such a practice, we must first know it to be true: we doubt if any of your judgment, otherwise rightly qualified, have been cast out of Church Sessions by any of our number upon the account of their differing from us; If for other relevant and uncontroverted causes, they be either judicially removed, or charged in an orderly or peaceable way, why do you charge it upon this? And therefore notwithstanding this charge, we have still reason to cry out against the Act of your late Assembly, which you do not so faithfully repeat as need were when you say, "It doth ordain only such as adhere to the Protestations against the Assembly to be laid aside only from voicing in Presbyteries and Synods, because it ordains the same also against these who will not judicially under their hands engage themselves, not to hold up differences, &c." you do not only leave out this, but also bear your Readers in hand that that which you mention is all, when yet by another Act of your former Assembly, which you have not repeated, you have ordained, "That all these who will not acknowledge the constitution thereof, or who do not acquiesce nor submit to the Acts thereof, shall be proceeded against with the censures of this Kirk." And will not this cast them out of Sessions also, and at last out of the Church it self?

*Answer to the tenth Query.*

Is this Query, by which you ask, "What warrant or approved precedent in this or any reformed Kirk can we shew for our admitting Ruling Elders and private persons in our publick Meetings, to pray publickly amongst so many Ministers." Is this (we say) one of these things concerning which you did preface, that our clear & distinct answer thereto would satisfy much the minds of many concerning the sincerity of our endeavors for healing, and our willingness to remove these things, which in the apprehensions of many are real impediments and stumbling-blocks cast in the way of union and peace; We profess, we wonder how you should make such a stir about so innocent and harmless a practice, yea, as

it is circumstantial so commendable and christian, and edifying a practise. We meet together in a day of temptation and calamity, and not in a judicial capacity but in a voluntary way for seeking of the Lords face, and for encouraging and comforting one another, and for considering what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do in reference to the tryals and snares of these times; and because in these Meetings able and godly Elders and Professours are sometimes desired to pray, you not only print it among your Observations about the late differences, as a new way in the Kirk of *Scotland*, and all reformed Kirks, and that which smells much of the way of Independents, but also put us to a Quære upon it, to give our warrant for it, as if it were some very unwarrantable thing. Would to God there were nothing in the way of Independents that smells worse then this; we cannot endure to have it said, that this is any of the things that differenceth the Presbyterian way from the Independant way, and by insinuating thereof, as you do give just occasion of stumbling to many, to you do injury to the truth. But to your Question. 1. We would know if you would allow a Ruling Elder, or a Professor, to pray in any Meeting where a Minister is present, and if in any Meeting, why not in these Meetings of ours which are so circumstantial? 2. You may be pleased to ask sundry of your own number, particularly the Reverend and worthy Brother by whose hands your Letter was transmittit unto us, by what warrant or approven precedent in this or any other reformed Kirk they did countenance & allow this practise in such Meetings as ours in the time of the Prelats. 3. We desire you to look upon the Records of the Assembly at *Edinburgh*, in the year 1567 in the month of *June*, and see who was Moderator of that Meeting, and we do not think that you will say, That he prayed not in the Meeting, or that he might not have been admitted to pray by the same warrant that he was admitted to moderate. 4. We find it the practise of the reformed Church in *France*, which is also warranted and approven in their form of Church Discipline, That the Elders upon ordinary dayes pray publickly in the Congregation in the absence of their own Minister. And is this practise forborn, or cometh it unwarrantable if other Ministers be present at the Meeting? 5. By the same warrant that we may in extrajudicial Meetings admit Ruling Elders and Professours to desire others by their conferences where Ministers are present, by the same warrant may we also admit them to edifie them by prayer. Is not Prayer one of the duties

duties of mutual Edification which are competent to all Christians in reference one to another, as well as conference is.

*Answer to the eleventh Quere.*

We assume the power of the Commission, because it was committed unto us by the General Assembly 1650. since which time there hath been no lawful, free General Assembly in this Church. If a *quorum*, or if the greater number of Commissioners have deserted, or given up their trust to these to whom they should not have given it up, as having no power to receive it from them; it doth not therefore follow, that we should do so also, or that we being a *quorum* should not claim and keep that trust. That some of our selves were a part of these who gave it up, is more then we know, and until you bring good evidence for it, you will give us leave to suspend our assent to the truth of it. We will find our selves accountable to the next free lawful G. Assemb. of the Kirk of Scotland, which another *quorum* of our Commission, nor any else that is a member of this Church can warrantably decline; and as none who shal so do shal therein be approven by us, so do we not know any just ground to fear any such thing of a *quorum* of our Commission.

*Answer to the twelfth Quere.*

What though this were true, that we neither have nor had at any of our Meetings since the expiring of the year 1650. the subscribed Commission given to us by the General Assembly 1650. yet before that time and after, the Assembly giving of that Commission unto us, we had it at many of our Meetings, by which we attained the knowledge of the powers, members, *quorum*, and date thereof. Is it a sufficient reason why we may not act by vertue thereof, because it hath perished through the injury and violence of the times, or because others have given it up into the hands of these who had no power to receive it, or because the Clerks Depute in whose custody it was, denies to produce it to us; no indifferent man will think that casual events, or fraud, or violence upon the written Commission should divest us of the power committed to us thereby; upon supposal that your Commission from your Assembly at Dundee had perished at Elliot, would you have thought it a good argument why you should have laid aside your power? Or upon supposal that all the Kirk Registers had perished either by fire or water, or been violently taken away immediately after the rising of the Assemb. 1650. will you say, that the Commissioners nominated by that Assembly could not warrantably have acted any thing in that capacity, because

cause the Commission was lost: Where we pray you was the Commission of these Commissioners who were authors of the Publick Resolutions towards the end of *Decem.* 1650? had they it then in their possession, or could they command it? your selves know it to be otherwise; yet did they think they wanted to proceed notwithstanding the want thereof. *Do so also,* if there be nothing to let us see the truth, as you do insinuate it to be.

*Answer to the thirteenth Quere.*

The power which we have and claim is the power of the Commission of the Assembly 1650. which as to the substantials is the same with that of the former Commission, though in regard of circumstances, and some particulars therein, the power is to be exercised there by some difference. If we cannot but know that the members and *quorum* are not the same, why do ye quarrel with us in your former Quere, as though we did not know the members and *quorum* of the Commission 1650. And do we not know them as well as the authors of the Publick Resolutions did in *December*, 1650. when the fundamentals was laid of our present differences?

*Answer to the fourteenth Quere.*

It seems by this last Quere that you your selves do not lay much weight upon what you did formerly ask us, to wit, *How we can pretend to act by vertue of the Commission 1650. which we neither have, nor never had at any of our Meetings*; because it seems you conceive that we might haply have an authentick extract thereof, upon which ye propound this new Quere. If the printing of our Commission be of such importance as you hold it forth, we may haply hereafter have opportunity to satisfy you in that; but if you do think this so necessary, because our Commission is so much questioned in the powers, members, *quorum*, and the very being of it, why did not you print your Commission from the Assembly at *Dundee*, or that from your late Assembly at *Edinburgh*, which is as much questioned in all these as ours is?

We have now answered your Queres clearly and distinctly, that you may know our judgment upon every one of them, and do expect the like measure of ingenuity and condescendence from you upon propounding unto you some other questions concerning some things in your way, unto which your direct and clear Answers may contribute for clearing thereof in our consciences, and in the consciences of many of the Lords People thorowout the Land, who have stumbled



stumbled thereat, at least may let us know whether we have rightly con-  
 strued and understood your meaning & proceedings therein: but because  
 we have already exceeded the length of a Letter, we shall at this time for-  
 bear till a more seasonable opportunity, and beseech you again & again  
 in the fear of the Lord, consider what fruit you have, or what it is this  
 poor Letter hath wrought in you: like to have in all or any of these things  
 which you have been solicited with such a deal of fervour  
 and zeal, to the building up of the hearts and strengthening of the hands  
 of many of the wicked, to the building the hearts & weakening the hands  
 of many of the godly in the Land. We speak it not either to encrease your  
 sorrow or your reproach, but if it were our last word, we think that we  
 might in sincerity and confidence of heart, as before the Lord, adventure  
 to say, That with and by these Resolutions of yours, and the things that  
 have followed thereupon, as the native consequences thereof, the work of  
 Reformation, Piety and Godliness have taken a loss blow thoroughout  
 the Land, and that the wicked and ungodly have been made to lift up  
 the head and iniquity to prevail and abound, it must be a mystery that  
 is worthy of your search, that so many gracious able Ministers, Elders,  
 and Professors in the Land, whose souls we are sure (your selves being  
 Judges) doth cleave to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Govern-  
 ment of the Kirk of Scotland, and who, all along since the beginning of  
 the work of Reformation, were amongst the most forward and zealous  
 to bestow, and to be bestowed for the same, should now so much scarce  
 at your way; and not only these who heretofore were always known to  
 be insincere and lukewarm in the work of the Lord, but also these who  
 still have been backward and untoward, yea obstinate enemies and op-  
 posers thereof, and strangers to the power of godliness, yea prophane and  
 scandalous in their way; and who, because of the faithfulness and zeal  
 of many of you for reforming of the House of God, did hate you and  
 reproach you no less then they do now hate and reproach us, should  
 now contend for your present way as for life and death. What can it be  
 that hath so darkened the judgments, dazled the eyes, and blunted the  
 Zeal of the one, and that hath so cleared the judgments, and opened the  
 eyes and quickned the zeal of the other? We know that it is a false and able  
 man among you to turn off things in debate, but it is with the conscien-  
 ces of His People with whom you have to do, to whom it concerns you,  
 as before the Lord, to approve your selves: there is a spirit in man, by  
 the inspiration of the Almighty, gives understanding. The Lord give  
 you understanding in all things. Amen.

1. B.D. (N.B.)

July 19.

1653.

1653.

1653.

1653.

1653.

Signed in the Name, and by the Warrant of the  
 Elders, etc. met at Edinburgh, for their testimony against  
 the course of Dissolution, separation in the late Parliament Resolu-  
 tions and pretended Assemblies at Dundee and Edinburgh.

By

Mr. J. Hamilton

F. I. N. I.

1. The Royal arms of Scotland; the shield

not crowned. ROBERTVS DEI IC REX SCOTIE.

Pro<sup>re</sup> A Sallire reaching to the extremity of the  
 crown; a fleur de lis in each side angle; a trefoil  
 in that of Ash and bottom. XPC. REGNAT XPC. VINCI<sup>t</sup>.

314 2. This differs from the preceding only in the lo-  
 -gend of the obverse. ROBERTVS DEI IC REX SCOT.

284 3. At the last; except having on the Reverse VINCI<sup>t</sup>.

h.